TWELVE ENGLISH POETS

BELLAMY

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SKETCHES OF THE LIVES AND SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS OF THE TWELVE REPRESENTATIVE ENGLISH POETS FROM CHAUCER TO TENNYSON

BY

BLANCHE WILDER BELLAMY

"And to hem give I feyth and ful credence,
And in myn herte have hem in reverence."

"For oute of olde feldys as men sey,
Cometh al this newe corn from yer to yere;
And out of olde bokis, in good fey
Comyth al this newe science that men lere."

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PREFACE.

THE sketches collected in this volume, and published under the title of "Twelve English Poets," were prepared at the request of the editors of the *Outlook*, and originally appeared in that journal.

Their purpose is to show to young readers what has been the direct line of descent of English poetry, and to provide them with a brief introduction to the work of these great masters, in the hope that such an early introduction may lead to a lifelong intimacy with them.

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BLANCHE WILDER BELLAMY.

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TWELVE ENGLISH POETS.

I. GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

(1328–1340) — 1400.

ENGLISH poetry is like the message-torch of Gaelic story. The poets are the torch-bearers. They carry to men in the signal flame of poetry the message which stirs them to life. From century to century and from hand to hand this torch has been passed on, and now it casts a line of light on the path of nearly six hundred years.

The first of these torch-bearers, the first great English poet, is Geoffrey Chaucer. On the long roll of honor no one ever more richly merited the name of "poet" than did he, for a poet is a *maker*, and Chaucer was a maker in his own literature and language in no common way.

To know him we must go back more than five hundred years, to the stirring, brilliant fourteenth century, and to the glorious reign of Edward the Third. Dante, the great Italian poet, had been dead but a few years; Petrarch and Boccaccio were living and writing in Italy, and the Black Prince was about to win his spurs in the French wars when at some disputed date between the years 1328 and 1340

Chaucer was born in London, where his father was a vintner, or wine-tunner.

We soon begin to hear of him as a part of the court, "the most splendid in Europe," first as page to Prince Lionel, and then to a powerful patron, John of Gaunt, "time-honored Lancaster." When King Edward went with his proud army of invasion into France, three years after the battle of Poitiers, Chaucer went too, and was taken prisoner, but soon ransomed by the king. He was married to a court lady, supposed to have been Philippa de Roet, a lady-in-waiting on Queen Philippa. He was afterwards sent on seven diplomatic missions, three of them to Italy, where we like to believe that he met Petrarch and Boccaccio, "the prince of story-tellers."

Offices and honors were heaped upon him, also, at home, and he became a member of Parliament for the shire of Kent. After this, for a few years his good fortune waned, and he lost some of his offices while John of Gaunt was absent in Portugal. But Richard the Second, moved perhaps by the little poem "To My Empty Purse," gave him a pension and a tun of wine yearly; and when, in 1399, Richard was deposed, and Henry the Fourth, John of Gaunt's son, came to the throne, within three days afterwards he doubled the poet's pension in honor of "his own friend and his father's friend."

On the next Christmas Eve, Chaucer leased a house in the Garden of St. Mary's, Westminster, on the ground where the splendid chapel of Henry the Seventh stands now, and there, in less than a year, in October of 1400, he died and was buried close at hand, the first of all their mighty band to sleep in the Poets' Corner of the great Abbey of Westminster.

Chaucer lived for more than threescore of the epoch-

making years of history, and these are some of the titles he earned in them:

"The grand Translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucer."
"The Firste Fynder of our faire langage."
"The Father of English Poetry."
"The Floure of Eloquence."
"Reverend Chaucer, rose of rethoris all."
"The Load-starre of English poetry."
"The Well of English undefyled."
"The Poet of the Dawn."
"The English Morning Star of Song."
"Dan Chaucer, the First Warbler."

He was called by Eustache Deschamps, a French poet of the day, "the grand Translateur" because he translated the "Roman de la Rose," the most popular of the French mediæval poems in the fourteenth century. His title of "Finder" of our language is quite as well deserved. When William and his Normans conquered England and the Saxons in 1066, they brought with them not only a new rule, but a new language, and during three hundred years a form of this language, the Anglo-Norman, became the speech, in England, of the court, and of the tribunals of justice, and was used in the opening of Parliament. Latin was used by scholars or clerks, while the Anglo-Saxon was kept under and made of small account, as Walter Scott amusingly shows in his introduction to "Ivanhoe." "English was not taught in the schools, but French only, until after the accession of Richard the Second, or possibly the latter years of Edward the Third, and Latin was always studied through the French." But a natural and gradual coalescence of the two languages went on, as the two races lived together in a common country; as they came to have common interests to protect; and

as, in the wars of Edward the Third, they found a common foe to fight.

Chaucer, who was a learned scholar, had two vocabularies to choose from. "He heard humming around him," we are told, "Latin, French, and English words in wild confusion, and said, like the writer of the 'Testament of Love' (once thought to be his own), 'Let clerks indite in Latin, . . . and let the French in French indite their quaint terms, for it is kindly to their mouths, and let *us* sow our fantasies in such words as we learn of our mother tongue.'" So, understanding and choosing from all sources, but duly honoring his native Saxon, he came to be called the finder of his native tongue.

A third of Chaucer's writing was in prose, and when we remember that he has left us thirty-three thousand and ninety lines of verse, we cannot wonder that he begins the "Parlement of Fowles" with the sigh, "The Life so short, the craft so long to learn." "The Death of Blaunche, the Duchesse," "The Parlement of Fowles," "The House of Fame," "The Legende of Good Women," and a translation of Boethius are distinguished and familiar among his works, but the great and crowning work, the first splendid, characteristic, English narrative poem is the "Canterbury Tales." In the prologue to the poem (over which Dryden wrote "Here is God's Plenty!") the poet tells us that he goes to the Tabard Inn in Southwark, to lie for a night before starting on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Thomas A' Becket, in the Cathedral Church of Canterbury. While there, a company of "wel nyne-and-twenty" other pilgrims comes to lodge in the same hostelry, and next morning they set forth, the host of the Tabard and the poet joining them. A knight and his son, a young squire; a yeman, or yeoman; a prioresse, named Madame Eglentyne; another nonne, or nun, and three preestes, or priests; a monk, a frere or friar; a marchant,

or merchant; a clerk, or scholar; a man of lawe, or lawyer; a Frankeleyn, or freeholder; a haberdassher and a carpenter; a webbe, a dyere, and a tapicer — that is, a weaver, a dyer, and an upholsterer; a shipman, or sailor; a doctour; a wyf, or woman of Bath; a persoun, or parson; a plowman; a reve, that is, a steward, or bailiff, and a miller; a somnour, or summoner, that is, an officer in an ecclesiastical court; a pardoner, or seller of indulgences; and a maunciple, or an official who buys provisions for a college or an inn, — these are the "companye," and they agree that as they ride they shall entertain each other by telling tales. These stories, of which there are twenty-five, coming from all classes and conditions of people, have come to be relied upon as the truest history of the English men and women of Chaucer's day. Many of them are taken from the Italian or from the Latin; but Chaucer borrowed as the bee borrows the sweets from many flowers, and then assimilates and remakes them into his own honey; or, as he says himself, like

> Bëès (or flyës) smale
> That maken honey of flowers.

The knight's tale of "Palamon and Arcite"; the clerk's tale of "Patient Griselda"; the man of lawe's story of the "Pious Coustance"; the touching and simple little story of "Yonge Hugh of Lincoln," or the "Prioresse's Tale"; these are some of the favorites, but all have wit, or pathos, fun, satire, humor, insight, and all show us Chaucer as the lover of nature, yet the student of books and men; the shrewd, kindly, cultivated, scholarly, brilliant man of the world — the genuine English gentleman.

To know him we must read and re-read him. His language, looking at first puzzling, will, with a few simple rules, become easy to understand. Then his company will delight

us, and we shall often repeat with him the lines he places over the gate in the "Parlement of Fowles":

Thorgh me men gon into that blysful place
Of hertis hele, and dedly woundis cure;
Thorgh me men gon unto the welle of grace
Theere grene and lusty May shal evere endure;
This is the weye to al good aventure;
Be glad, thow redere, and thyn sorwe out caste,
Al opyn am I, passe in and sped the faste!

THE CANTERBURY TALES.

THE GENERAL PROLOGUE.

Here bygynneth the Book of the tales of Caunterbury.

Whan that Aprille with hise shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne,
And smale foweles maken melodye
That slepen al the nyght with open eye, —
So priketh hem Nature in hir corages, —
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes
To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende
The hooly blisful martir for to seke
That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.

Bifil that in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay,

Redy to wenden on my pilgrymage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At nyght were come in-to that hostelrye
Well nyne-and-twenty in a compaignye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle
In felaweshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.
The Chambres and the stables weren wyde
And wel we weren esed atte beste.
And shortly whan the sonne was to-reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everychon
That I was of hir felaweshipe anon,
And made forward erly for to ryse
To take oure wey, ther as I yow devyse.
But nathelees, whil I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thynketh it accordaunt to resoun
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren and of what degree
And eek in what array that they were inne;
And at a Knyght than wol I first bigynne.

A Knyght ther was and that a worthy man,
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To riden out, he loved chivalrie,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisie.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden no man ferre,
As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse,

And evere honoured for his worthynesse.
At Alisaundre he was whan it was wonne;
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
Aboven alle nacions in Pruce.
In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce, —
No cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade, at the seege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.
At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,
When they were wonne; and in the Grete See
At many a noble armee hadde he be.
  At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for oure feith at Tramyssene
In lystes thries, and ay slayn his foo.
This ilke worthy knyght hadde been also
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye
Agayn another hethen in Turkye;
And everemoore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meeke as is a mayde.
He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde
In al his lyf un-to no maner wight.
He was a verray parfit, gentil knyght.
  But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors was goode but he was nat gay,
Of fustian he wered a gypoun
Al bismotered with his habergeoun
For he was late ycome from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrymage.

With hym ther was his sone, a yong Squier,
A lovyere and a lusty bacheler,
With lokkes crulle as they were leyd in presse.
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
And wonderly delyvere and of greet strengthe,
And he hadde been somtyme in chyvachie,
In Flaundres, in Artoys and Pycardie,
And born hym weel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a meede
Al ful of fresshe floures whyte and reede;
Syngynge he was or floytynge, al the day;
He was as fressh as is the monthe of May.
Short was his gowne, with sleves longe and wyde.
Wel koude he sitte on hors and faire ryde;
He koude songes make and wel endite,
Juste and eek daunce and weel purtreye and write.
So hoote he lovede that by nyghtertale
He slepte namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale;
Curteis he was, lowely and servysable,
And carf biforn his fader at the table.

* * * *

Ther was also a Nonne, a Prioresse,
That of hir smylyng was ful symple and coy;
Hire gretteste ooth was but by seint Loy,
And she was cleped Madame Eglentyne.
Ful weel she soonge the service dyvyne,
Entuned in hir nose ful semeely,
And Frenssh she spak ful faire and fetisly

After the scole of Stratford-atte-Bowe,
For Frenssh of Parys was to hire unknowe.
At mete wel ytaught was she with alle,
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
Ne wette hir fyngres in hir sauce depe,
Wel koude she carie a morsel and wel kepe,
That no drope ne fille up-on hire breste;
In curteisie was set ful muchel hir leste.
Hire over lippe wyped she so clene,
That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng sene
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,
And sikerly she was of greet desport,
And ful plesaunt and amyable of port,
And peyned hire to countrefete cheere
Of Court, and to been estatlich of manere,
And to ben holden digne of reverence;
But for to speken of hire conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous
She wolde wepe if that she saugh a mous
Kaught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
Of smale houndés hadde she that she fedde
With rosted flessh, or milk and wastel breed;
But soore wepte she if any of hem were deed,
Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte,
And al was conscience and tendre herte.
Full semyly hir wympul pynched was;
Hire nose tretys, hir eyen greye as glas,
Hir mouth ful smal and ther to softe and reed,
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;

It was almoost a spanne brood I trowe,
For hardily she was nat undergrowe.
Ful fetys was hir cloke as I was war;
Of smal coral aboute hire arm she bar
A peire of bedes gauded al with grene,
And theron heng a brooch of gold ful sheene,
On which ther was first write a crowned A,
And after *Amor vincit omnia.*

* * * *

A Clerk ther was of Oxenford also
That un-to logyk hadde longe ygo,
And lene was his hors as is a rake,
And he nas nat right fat, I undertake,
But looked holwe and ther to sobrely;
Ful thredbare was his overeste courtepy
For he hadde geten hym yet no benefice,
Ne was so worldly to have office;
For hym was levere have at his beddes heed
Twenty bookes clad in blak or reed
Of Aristotle and his philosophie,
Than robes riche or fithele or gay sautrie;
But al be that he was a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre.
But al that he myghte of his freendes hente
On bookes and his lernynge he it spente,
And bisily gan for the soules preye
Of hem that gaf hym wher with to scholeye.
Of studie took he moost cure and moost heede,
Noght o word spak he moore than was neede,
And that was seyd in forme and reverence

And short and quyk and ful of hy sentence.
Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche
And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche.

A Sergeant of the Lawe, war and wys,
That often hadde been at the Parvys,
Ther was also ful riche of excellence.
Discreet he was and of greet reverence;
He semed swich, hise wordes weren so wise.
Justice he was ful often in Assise,
By patente and by pleyn commissioun,
For his science and for his heigh renoun.
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon;
So greet a purchasour was nowher noon.
Al was fee symple to hym in effect,
His purchaysyng myghte nat been infect.
Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semed bisier than he was.
In termes hadde he caas and doomes alle
That from the tyme of Kyng William were yfalle;
Ther-to he koude endite and make a thyng,
Ther koude no wight pynchen at his writyng;
And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.
He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote
Girt with a ceint of silk with barres smale;
Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

* * * *

A good man was ther of religioun
And was a Povre Persoun of a Toun;
But riche he was of hooly thoght and werk;

He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes Gospel trewely wolde preche,
Hise parisshens devoutly wolde he teche
Benygne he was and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee full pacient;
And swich he was y-preved ofte sithes
Ful looth were hym to cursen for hise tithes,
But rather wolde he geven, out of doute,
Un-to his povre parisshens aboute,
Of his offryng and eek of his substaunce.
He koude in litel thyng have suffisaunce.
Wyd was his Parisshe, and houses fer-a-sonder,
But he ne lafte nat for reyn ne thonder,
In siknesse nor in meschief to visite
The ferreste in his parisshe muche and lite
Up-on his feet and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his sheepe he gaf
That first he wroghte and afterward he taughte.
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte,
And this figure he added eek ther to,
That if gold ruste what shal iren doo?

* * * *
* * * *

He sette nat his benefice to hyre
And leet his sheepe encombred in the myre,
And ran to Londoun un-to Saint Poules
To seken him a chauntrie for soules;
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde,
But dwelleth at hoom and kepeth wel his folde,

So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie, —
He was a shepherde, and noght a mercenarie :
And though he hooly were and vertuous,
He was not to sinful man despitous,
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,
But in his techyng discreet and benygne,
To drawen folk to hevene by fairnesse,
By good ensample, this was his bisynesse.
But it were any persone obstinat,
What so he were, of heigh or lough estat,
Hym wolde he snybben sharply for the nonys.
A bettre preest I trowe that nowher noon ys ;
He waiteth after no pompe and reverence,
Ne maketh him a spiced conscience,
But Christes loore and his Apostles twelve,
He taughte, but first he folwed it hym selve.

From

THE MAN OF LAWE'S TALE.

" The king comandeth his constable anon,
Up peyne of hangyng, and on heigh juyse,
That he ne sholde suffren, in no wyse,
Custance in-with his reawme for tabyde
Thre dayes and o quarter of a tyde ;
But in the same ship as he hire fond,

Hire, and hir yonge sone, and al hir geere
He sholde putte, and croude hire fro the lond,
And chargen hire she never eft coome theere!"
O my Custance, wel may thy goost have feere,
And slepynge in thy dreem been in penance,
Whan Donegild cast al this ordinance.

This messager on morwe, when he wook,
Un-to the castel halt the nexte way,
And to the constable he the lettre took;
And whan that he this pitous lettre say,
Ful ofte he seyde, "Allas! and weylaway!
Lord Crist," quod he, "how may this world endure?
So ful of synne is many a creature!

"O myghty God, if that it be thy wille,
Sith thou art rightful juge, how may it be
That thou wolt suffren innocentz to spille,
And wikked folk regnen in prosperitee?
O goode Custance! Allas, so wo is me,
That I moot be thy tormentour or deye
On shames deeth, ther is noon oother weye."

Wepen bothe yonge and olde in al that place,
Whan that the kyng this cursed lettre sente,
And Custance, with a deedly pale face,
The ferthe day toward the ship she wente;
But natheless she taketh in good entente
The wyl of Crist and knelynge on the stronde,
She seyde, "Lord ay wel-come be thy sonde;
He that me kepte fro the false blame,
While I was on the lond amonges yow,
He kan me kepe from harm, and eek fro shame,

In salte see, al thogh I se noght how,
As strong as evere he was he is yet now.
In hym triste I, and in his mooder deere, —
That is to me my seyl, and eek my steere."
Hir litel child lay wepyng in hir arm,
And knelynge, pitously to hym she seyde,
"Pees, litel sone, I wol do thee noon harm!"
With that hir kerchef of hir heed she breyde
And over hise litel eyen she it leyde,
And in her arm she lulleth it ful faste,
And in-to hevene hire eyen up she caste.
"Mooder," quod she, "and mayde, bright Marie,
Sooth in that thurgh wommanes eggement
Man-kynde was lorn, and damned ay to dye,
For which thy child was on a croys yrent, —
Thy blisful eyen sawe al his torment, —
Thanne is ther no comparison bitwene
Thy wo and any wo man may sustene.
Thow sawe thy child yslayn bifore thyne eyen,
And yet now lyveth my litel child, parfay!
Now lady bright, to whom alle woful cryen, —
Thow glorie of wommanhede, thow faire May,
Thow haven of refut, brighte sterre of day,
Rewe on my child, that of thy gentillesse
Ruest on every reweful in distresse.
"O litel child, allas! what is thy gilt,
That nevere wroghtest synne as yet pardee?
Why wil thyn harde fader han thee spilt?
O mercy, deere constable," quod she,
"As lat my litel child dwelle heer with thee;

And if thou darst nat saven hym for blame,
Yet kys hym ones in his fadres name!"
Ther with she looked bakward to the londe,
And seyde, "Fare-wel, housbonde routheleess!"
And up she rist, and walketh doun the stronde
Toward the ship, — hir folweth al the prees, —
And evere she preyeth hire child to hold his pees;
And taketh hir leve, and with an hooly entente,
She blissed hire and in-to ship she wente.
Vitailled was the ship, it is no drede,
Habundantly for hire ful longe space;
And othere necessaries that sholde nede
She hadde ynogh, heryed be Goddes grace!
For wynd and weder, almyghty God purchace!
And bring hire hoom, I kan no bettre seye;
But in the see she dryveth forth hir weye.

THE PRIORESSE'S TALE.

Ther was in Asye, in a greet citee,
Amonges cristene folk, a Jewerye,
Sustened by a lord of that contree
For foule usure, and lucre of vileynye,
Hateful to Crist and to his compaignye;
And thurgh the strete men myghte ride or wende,
For it was free, and open at eyther ende.
A litel scole of cristen folk ther stood

Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were
Children an heepe, ycomen of cristen blood,
That lerned in that scole yeer by yere
Swich manere doctrine as men used there,—
This is to seyn, to syngen and to rede,
As smale children doon in hire childhede.
Among thise children was a wydwes sone,
A litel clergeoun, seven yeer of age,
That day by day to schole was his wone;
And eek also, where as he saugh thymage
Of Cristes mooder, he hadde in usage,
As hym was taught, to knele adoun and seye
His Ave Marie, as he goth by the weye.
Thus hath this wydwe her litel sone ytaught
Oure blisful lady, Cristes mooder deere,
To worshipe ay, and he forgate it naught,
For sely child wol alday soone leere,—
But ay whan I remembre on this mateere,
Seint Nicholas stant evere in my presence,
For he so yong to Crist dide reverence.
This litel child his litel book lernynge,
As he sat in the schole at his prymer,
He *Alma redemptoris* herde synge,
As children lerned hire anthiphoner;
And as he dorste, he drough hym ner and ner,
And herkned ay the wordes and the noote,
Til he the firste vers koude al by rote.
Noght wiste he what this Latyn was to seye,
For he so yong and tendre was of age;
But on a day his felawe gan he preye

Texpounden hym this song in his langage,
Or telle him why this song was in usage;
This preyde he hym to construe and declare
Ful often time upon his knowes bare.

His felawe, which that elder was than he,
Answerde hym thus: "This song I have here seye
Was maked of oure blisful lady free,
Hire to salue, and eek hire for to preye
To been oure help and socour whan we deye;
I kan na moore expounde in this mateere,
I lerne song, I kan but smal grammeere."

"And is this song maked in reverence
Of Cristes mooder?" seyde this innocent.

"Now certes, I wol do my diligence
To konne it al er Cristemasse is went,
Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,
And shal be beten thries in an houre,
I wol it konne our lady for to honoure!"

His felawe taughte hym homward prively
Fro day to day, til he koude it by rote,
And thanne he song it wel and boldely
Fro word to word, acordynge with the note.
Twies a day it passed thurgh his throte,
To scoleward and homward whan he wente;
On Cristes mooder set was his entente.

As I have seyd, thurgh-out the Jewerie
This litel child, as he cam̄ to and fro,
Ful murily wolde he synge and crie
O Alma redemptoris evere-mo.
The swetnesse hath his herte perced so

Of Cristes mooder, that to hire to preye
He kan nat stynte of syngyng by the weye.
Oure first foo, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in Jewes herte his waspes nest,
Up swal, and seide, "O Hebrayk peple, allas!
Is this to yow a thyng that is honest
That swich a boy shal walken as hym lest
In your despit, and synge of swich sentence,
Which is agayn youre lawes reverence?"
Fro thennes forth the Jewes han conspired
This innocent out of this world to chace.
An homycide ther-to han they hyred,
That in an aleye hadde a privee place;
And as the child gan forby for to pace,
This cursed Jew hym hente and heeld hym faste,
And kitte his throte, and in a pit him caste.
I seye that in a wardrobe they hym threwe
Where as thise Jewes purgen hire entraille.
O cursed folk of Herodes al newe!
What may youre yvel entente yow availle?
Mordre wol out certeyn, it wol nat faille,
And namely, ther thonour of God shal sprede
The blood out-crieth on youre cursed dede.
O martir, sowded to virginitee!
Now maystow syngen, folwynge evere in oon
The white Lamb celestial, quod she,
Of which the grete Evaungelist, Seint John,
In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they that goon
Biforn this Lamb, and synge a song al newe,
That nevere fleshly wommen they ne knewe.

This povre wydwe awaiteth al that nyght
After hir litel child, but he cam noght,
For which, as soone as it was dayes lyght,
With face pale of drede and bisy thoght,
She hath at schole and elles-where hym soght;
Til finally she gan so fer espie
That he last seyn was in the Jewerie,
With moodres pitee in hir brest enclosed
She gooth, as she were half out of hir mynde,
To every place where she hath supposed
By liklihede hir litel child to fynde;
And evere on Cristes mooder, meeke and kynde,
She cride, and atte laste thus she wroghte,
Among the cursed Jewes she hym soghte.
She frayneth and she preyeth pitously,
To every Jew that dwelte in thilke place,
To telle hire if hir child wente ought forby.
They seyde "Nay," but Jhesu of his grace
Gaf in hir thoght inwith a litel space,
That in that place after hir sone she cryde,
Where he was casten in a pit bisyde.

O grete God that parfournest thy laude
By mouth of innocentz, lo heere thy myght!
This gemme of chastite, this emeraude,
And eek of martirdom the ruby bright,
Ther he, with throte ykorven lay upright,
He *Alma redemptoris* gan to synge
So loude, that all the place gan to rynge!

The cristene folk that thurgh the strete wente,
In coomen, for to wondren on this thyng;

And hastily they for the provost sente.
He came anon, with outen tariyng,
And herieth Crist that is of hevene kyng,
And eek his mooder, honour of mankynde,
And after that the Jewes leet he bynde.
This child, with pitous lamentacioun,
Up taken was, syngynge his song alway;
And with honour of greet processioun
They carien hym un-to the nexte abbay.
His mooder swownynge by his beere lay;
Unnethe myghte the peple that was theere
This newe Rachel brynge fro his beere.
With torment and with shameful deeth echon,
This provost dooth the Jewes for to sterve,
That of this mordre wiste, and that anon;
He nolde no swich cursednesse observe,
"Yvele shal have that yvele wol deserve,"
Therfore with wilde hors he dide hem drawe,
And after that he heng hem by the lawe.
Up-on his beere ay lith this innocent
Biforn the chief auter, whil masse laste,
And after that the abbot with his covent
Han sped hem for to burien hym ful faste;
And when they hooly water on hym caste,
Yet spak this child whan spreynd was hooly water
And song, *O Alma redemptoris mater!*
This abbot which that was an hooly man,
As monkes been, or elles oghte be,
This yonge child to conjure he bigan,
And seyde, "O deere child, I halse thee,

In vertu of the hooly Trinitee,
Tel me what is thy cause for to synge,
Sith that thy throte is kut to my semynge?"
"My throte is kut un-to my nekke boon,"
Seyde this child, "and as by wey of kynde
I sholde have dyed, ye, longe tyme agon;
But Jhesu Crist, as ye in bookes fynde,
Wil, that his glorie laste and be in mynde,
And for the worship of his mooder deere,
Yet may I synge *O Alma* loude and cleere.
"This welle of mercy, Cristes mooder sweete,
I loved alwey, as after my konnynge,
And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete,
To me she cam, and bad me for to synge
This anthem verraily in my deyynge,
As ye han herd, and whan that I hadde songe
Me thoughte she leyde a greyn up-on my tonge:
Wherfore I synge, and synge I moot certeyn
In honour of that blisful mayden free,
Til fro my tonge of-taken is the greyn;
And afterward thus seyde she to me,
'My litel child now wol I fecche thee
Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge ytake;
Be nat agast, I wol thee nat forsake.'"
This hooly monk, this abbot, hym meene I,
His tonge out caughte and took awey the greyn,
And he gaf up the goost ful softely.
And whan this abbot hadde this wonder seyn,
Hise salte teeris trikled doun as reyn,
And gruf he fil, al plat up-on the grounde,

And stille he lay as he had ben ybounde.
The covent eek lay on the pavement
Wepynge, and heryen Cristes mooder deere,
And after that they ryse and forth been went,
And tooken awey this martir from his beere;
And in a temple of marbul stones cleere,
Enclosen they his litel body sweete:
Ther he is now, God leve us for to meete!
O yonge Hugh of Lyncoln, slayn also
With cursed Jewes, as it is notable,
For it is but a litel while ago,
Preye eek for us, we synful folk unstable,
That of his mercy God, so merciable,
On us his grete mercy multiplie
For reverence of his mooder, Marie. Amen.

From

THE DETHE OF BLAUNCHE, THE DUCHESSE.

I HAVE of sorwe so grete wone
That joy gete I never none,
Now that I see my lady bryght,
Which I have loved with al my myght,
Is fro me ded and ys a-goon
And thus in sorowe lefte me alone.

Allas, Dethe, what ayleth the
That thou noldest have taken me

Whan thou toke my lady swete
That was so faire, so freshe, so fre,
So goode, that men may wel se
Of al goodenesse she had no mete.

* * * *

"I sawgh hyr daunce so comelely,
Carole and synge so swetly,
Lawghe and pley so womanly,
And loke so debonairly,
So goodely speke, and so frendly,
That certes, I trowe that ever-more
Nas seyne so blysful a tresore,
For every heere on hir hede,
Soth to seyne, hyt was not rede,
Ne nouther yelowe, ne broune hyt nas,
Me thoghte most lyke gold hyt was.

"And which eyen my lady hadde!
Debonair, goode, glade, and sadde,
Symple, of goode mochel, noght to wyde,
Ther-to hir looke was not a-syde,
Ne overtwert, but besette so wele,
Hyt drewh and tooke up everydele
Al that on hir gan be-holde.
Hir eyen semed anoon she wolde
Have mercy, — foolys wenden soo —
But hyt was never the rather doo;
Hyt nas no countrefeted thynge,
Hyt was hir oune pure lokynge
That the goddesse, dame Nature,
Had made hem opene by mesure,

And cloos; for were she never so glad
Her lokynge was not foly sprad,
Ne wildely, thogh that she pleyde;
But ever me thoght hir eyen seyde,
'Be God, my wrathe ys al for-give!'
"Therwith hir lyste so wel to lyve,
That dulnesse was of hir a drad.
She nas to sobre, ne to glad."

THE LEGENDE OF GOODE WOMEN.

From The Prologue.

A THOUSANDE tymes I have herde telle,
There ys joy in hevene, and peyne in helle,
And I acorde wel that it ys so;
But natheles, yet wot I wel also,
That ther is noon dwellyng in this countree,
That eythir hath in hevene or helle ybe,
Ne may of hit noon other weyes witen,
But as he hath herd seyde, or founde it writen;
For by assay ther may no man it preve.
But God forbede but men shulde leve
Wel more thing then men han seen with eye!
Men shal not wenen every thing a lye
But-yf hymselfe yt seeth, or elles dooth;
For, God wot, thing is never the lasse sooth,
Thogh every wight ne may it not ysee.
Bernarde, the monke, ne saugh nat alle, parde!
Than mote we to bokes that we fynde,—
Thurgh which that olde thinges ben in mynde,—

And to the doctrine of these olde wyse,
Geve credence, in every skylful wise,
That tellen of these olde appreved stories,
Of holynesse, of regnes, of victories,
Of love, of hate, and other sondry thynges,
Of which I may not maken rehersynges.
And yf that olde bokes were awey,
Ylorne were of remembraunce the key.
Wel ought us, thanne, honouren and beleve
These bokes, there we han noon other preve.

And as for me, though that I konne but lyte,
On bokes for to rede I me delyte,
And to hem give I feyth and ful credence,
And in myn herte have hem in reverence
So hertely, that ther is game noon
That fro my bokes maketh me to goon,
But yt be seldom on the holy day,
Save certeynly, whan that the monethe of May
Is comen, and that I hear the foules synge,
And that the floures gynnen for to sprynge,—
Fairewel my boke, and my devocioun!

Now have I thanne suche a condicioun,
That of alle the floures in the mede,
Thanne love I most thise floures white and rede,
Suche as men callen daysyes in her toune.
To hem have I so grete affeccioun,
As I seyde erst, whanne comen is the May,
That in my bed ther daweth me no day,
That I nam uppe and walkyng in the mede,
To seen this floure agein the sonne sprede,

Whan it up rysith erly by the morwe;
That blisful sight softeneth al my sorwe,
So glad am I, when that I have presence
Of it, to doon it alle reverence,
As she that is of alle floures flour,
Fulfilled of al vertue and honour,
And evere ilike faire, and fresshe of hewe.
And I love it, and evere ylike newe,
And ever shal, til that myn herte dye.

THE COMPLEYNTE OF CHAUCER TO HIS PURSE.

To you, my purse, and to noon other wight
  Compleyn I, for ye be my lady dere!
I am so sorry now that ye been lyght,
  For certes, but-yf ye make me hevy chere,
  Me were as leef be layde upon my bere,
For which unto your mercy thus I crye,—
Beth hevy ageyne, or elles mote I dye!

Now voucheth sauf this day, or it be nyghte,
  That I of you the blissful soune may here,
Or see your colour lyke the sonne bryghte,
  That of yelownesse hadde never pere.
  Ye be my lyfe! ye be myn hertys stere!
Quene of comfort and goode companye!
Beth hevy ageyne, or elles mote I dye.

Now purse, that ben to me my lyves lyght
  And saveour, as doun in this worlde here,

Oute of this toune helpe me thurgh your myght,
Syn that ye wole not bene my tresorere;
For I am shave as nye as is a frere.
But I praye unto your curtesye,
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles moote I dye!

L'Envoye de Chaucer.

O conquerour of Brutes Albyoun,
Whiche that by lygne and free eleccioun
Been verray kynge, this song to you I sende,
And ye that mowen alle myn harme amende,
Have mynde upon my supplicacioun!

FLE FRO THE PRES.

Fle fro the pres and duelle with sothfastnesse;
Suffice the thy good, though hit be smale;
For horde hath hate and clymbyng tikelnesse,
Pres hath envye and wele is blent over alle,
Savour no more then the behove shalle;
Reule wel thyself that other folke canst rede,
And trouthe the shal delyver, hit ys no drede.

Peyne the not eche croked to redresse
In trust of hire that turneth as a balle,
Grete reste stant in lytil besynesse;
Bewar also to spurn agein an nalle,
Stryve not as doth a croke with a walle;
Daunte thyselfe that dauntest otheres dede,
And trouthe the shal delyver, hit is no drede.

That the ys sent receyve in buxumnesse,
The wrasteling of this world asketh a fall;
Her is no home, her is but wyldyrnesse.
Forth, Pilgrime! Forth, best, out of thy stalle!
Loke up on hye and thonke God of alle;
Weyve thy luste and let thy goste the lede,
And trouthe the shal delyver, hit is no drede!

II. EDMUND SPENSER.

1553–1598.

To find the hand stretched out to take the torch from Chaucer, we come from a great reign and a brilliant court to a greater reign and a more brilliant court — from the Plantagenets to the Tudors; from the time of Edward the Third and his grandsons, Richard and Henry, to "the glorious days of good Queen Bess"; from Geoffrey Chaucer to Edmund Spenser. A hundred and fifty years lie between these two singers, and in all that time England did not hear the voice of a great poet. She was busy enough with the Wars of the Roses, and the introduction of printing, and the introduction of the Protestant faith, and the growth of her commerce, and the development of her language, and the wonders of the New World; but with all this working there was very little singing.

At last, however, she found a voice, and then there was never such music heard before. In 1553 Spenser was born, in the shadow of London Tower. Like Chaucer, he was poor, but he belonged to a noble family. When a little lad he was sent to the Merchant Taylors' School; and to-day, if any boy in London goes down past Smithfield and the Great Market, where, in the reign of Bloody Mary, fires burned for the heretics, and inquires his way to the Charterhouse, he may hear the laughter and shouts of boys at cricket on the great playground which now belongs to this very Merchant Taylors' School. A little while ago an account-book of one of these rich old merchants was found,

and in it was marked, among other things, a sum given to "Edmund Spensore, scholar of the Merchant Taylors' School on going to Pembroke Hall, Cambridge."

There the young scholar richly rewarded his benefactor, and gained the two great benefits of college life, a good education and good friends. "He became very perfect in the Greek tongue," and he became the friend of Gabriel Harvey, who afterwards introduced him to Sir Philip Sidney, through whom he came to know the Earl of Leicester and Sir Walter Raleigh and all the train of brave and gay and gallant scholars, wits, voyagers, and courtiers who made up the famous court of Queen Elizabeth. Spenser lived in the "North Country" for two years after he left Cambridge, and there he fell in love with the "Widdowes' daughter of the Glen," the "fair Rosalind." Not long afterward he wrote his "Shepheardes Calender"— twelve pastoral poems, in which he calls on "The Gods of Love, that pitie lovers' paine," to hear the lament of Colin who cannot win fair Rosalind. He wrote, too, in his earlier days, some fine hymns in praise of love and beauty, the love which is

> "Lord of Truth and Loyalty,
> Lifting himself out of the lowly dust
> On golden plumes up to the purest sky."

Spenser was poor, but his patrons, Sidney and Leicester, introduced him at court, and he was appointed secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, the Lord Deputy who was sent to suppress Desmond's rebellion in Ireland. Spenser went with him and settled down to live at Kilcolman Castle, which, with three thousand acres of land, was given him by the Crown, and which had belonged to the rebellious Desmonds. He seems to have been consoled for the loss of Rosalind, for he married a lady named Elizabeth, with

whom for years he was very happy. At length, in a great uprising of the rebels, his castle was sacked and destroyed, his fortunes were ruined, and one of his little children was burned to death. He came back to London poor and broken-hearted, and after being there only three months he died, and was buried in the Poets' Corner of the Abbey. The great Essex ordered his funeral, and when he had lain quiet, close to Chaucer, for thirty years, Anne, Countess of Dorset, raised a monument to him, on which we still read:

"Heare lyes (expecting the second comminge of our Savior Jesus) the body of Edmonde Spenser, the Prince of Poets in his tyme, whose divine spirit needs noe othir witnesse than the works he left behinde him.

"He was born in London in the yeare 1553 and died in the yeare 1598."

"The Prince of Poets in his tyme,"
"The New Poet,"
"The Sage and Serious Spenser,"
"The Poets' Poet,"
"The Don Quixote of Poets, serenely abstracted and high,"
— these are the familiar titles which have been given to Spenser in the last three hundred years. His "Shepheardes Calender," dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, made him famous. His "Mother Hubberd's Tale," his "Sonnets," his noble "Epithalamion," or Wedding Hymn, his "Astrophel," or Lament for Sir Philip Sidney, all added to his fame, but it was his great poem of the "Faerie Queene" which crowned this fame and made it live.

Sir Walter Raleigh went once to visit Spenser in Ireland, and every boy must read Kingsley's glorious story of "Westward Ho" to get the most perfect picture of this visit. Spenser reads Raleigh the first three books of the "Faerie

Queene," and the brother poet in delight hurries him off to London to publish it to the world. In a letter to Raleigh Spenser explains the plan of the work, which is dedicated to "The Most Mightie and Magnificent Empresse Elizabeth, by the Grace of God Queen of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith." He says the general end of all the book is "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline." Prince Arthur is to be the hero of the whole poem. In twelve books he is "to be perfected in the twelve private moral virtues," each virtue having its own knight and his exploits. Then twelve more books are to be written on the political virtues. Prince Arthur is meant to represent Magnificence, or greatness of soul. The Faerie Queene, to whose court he goes, and from which the twelve knights start out upon their separate adventures, is first Glory, and then, in a secondary way, "The most excellent and glorious person of the Sovereign Queen Elizabeth." All of this part of the story was to appear in the twelfth book, but only six books were written. The first of these books narrates the adventures of the Red Cross Knight, or Holiness, and his fair Una, or Religion; the second book belongs to Sir Guyon, or Temperance; the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth, to Chastity, Friendship, Justice, and Courtesy.

But it is not for the story that we prize the "Faerie Queene." Its greatness lies in its rich, beautiful pictures, in its wonderful musical verse, in its high imagination, in its own magic enchantment. All the poets have loved it — this is why Charles Lamb calls Spenser "The Poets' Poet" — and all young people may learn to love it. "It is not so far off from any one of us," Kingsley makes Spenser say to Raleigh in "Westward Ho"; "wherever is love and loyalty, great purposes and lofty souls, even though in a hovel or in a mine, there is fairy land."

From

THE FIRSTE BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QUEENE.

Contayning the Legend of the Knight of the Red Crosse, or of Holinesse.

I.

Lo! I, the man whose Muse whylome did maske,
As time her taught, in lowly shepheards weeds,
Am now enforst a farre unfitter taske,
For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine oaten reeds,
And sing of knights and ladies gentle deeds;
Whose praises having slept in silence long,
Me all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds
To blazon broade emongst her learned throng:
Fierce warres and faithful loves shall moralize my song.

II.

Help then, O holy virgin! chiefe of nyne,
Thy weaker novice to perform thy will;
Lay forth out of thine everlasting scryne
The ántique rolles, which there lye hidden still,
Of Faerie knights and fayrest Tanaquill,
Whom that most noble Briton prince so long
Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,
That I must rue his undeserved wrong:
O, helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my dull tong!

III.

And thou, most dreaded impe of highest Iove,
Fair Venus sonne, that with thy cruell dart
At that good knight so cunningly didst rove,
That glorious fire it kindled in his hart;
Lay now thy deadly heben bowe apart,
And, with thy mother mylde, come to mine ayde;
Come, both; and with you bring triumphant Mart,
In loves and gentle iollities arraid,
After his murdrous spoyles and bloudie rage allayd.

IV.

And with them eke, O goddesse heavenly bright,
Mirrour of grace and majestie divine,
Great Ladie of the greatest Isle, whose light
Like Phœbus lampe throughout the world doth shine,
Shed thy faire beames into my feeble eyne,
And raise my thoughtes, too humble and too vile,
To thinke of that true glorious type of thine,
The argument of mine afflicted stile:
The which to heare, vouchsafe, O dearest Dread, a while.

CANTO I.

The patron of true Holinesse
Foule Errour doth defeate;
Hypocrisie, him to entrappe,
Doth to his home entreate.

I.

A GENTLE knight was pricking on the plaine,
Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,

Wherein old dints of deepe woundes did remaine,
The cruel markes of many a bloody fielde;
Yet armes till that time did he never wield:
His angry steede did chide his foaming bitt,
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:
Full iolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,
As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt.

II.

And on his brest a bloodie crosse he bore,
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,
And dead, as living, ever him ador'd:
Upon his shield the like was also scor'd
For soveraine hope, which in his helpe he had.
Right, faithfull, true he was in deede and word;
But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad;
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.

III.

Upon a great adventure he was bond,
That greatest Gloriana to him gave,
(That greatest glorious Queene of Faery Lond)
To winne him worshippe, and her grace to have,
Which of all earthly thinges he most did crave.
And ever as he rode, his hart did earne
To prove his puissance in battel brave
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne;
Upon his foe, a dragon horrible and stearne.

IV.

A lovely ladie rode him faire beside,
Upon a lowly asse more white than snow;
Yet she much whiter ; but the same did hide
Under a vele, that wimpled was full lowe;
And over all a blacke stole shee did throw,
As one that inly mournd; so was she sad,
And heavie sate upon her palfrey slow;
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had;
And by her in a line a milke-white lambe she lad.

V.

So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
She was in life and every vertuous lore,
And by descent from royall lynage came
Of ancient kinges and queenes, that had of yore
Their scepters stretcht from east to westerne shore
And all the world in their subjection held;
Till that infernal feend with foule uprore
Forwasted all their land, and them expeld;
Whom to avenge, she had this knight from far compeld.

VI.

Behind her farre away a dwarfe did lag,
That lasie seemd, in being ever last,
Or wearied with bearing of her bag
Of needments at his backe. Thus as they past,
The day with cloudes was suddeine overcast,
And angry Iove an hideous storme of raine

Did poure into his lemans lap so fast,
That everie wight to shrowd it did constrain;
And this faire couple eke to shroud themselves were fain.

VII.

Enforst to seek some covert nigh at hand,
A shadie grove not farr away they spide,
That promist ayde the tempest to withstand;
Whose loftie trees, yclad with sommers pride
Did spred so broad, that heavens light did hide,
Not perceable with power of any starr:
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
With footing worne, and leading inward farr:
Faire harbour that them seems; so in they entred ar.

* * * *

XXIX.

At length they chaunst to meet upon the way
An aged sire, in long blacke weedes yclad,
His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie gray,
And by his belt his booke he hanging had;
Sober he seemde, and very sagely sad;
And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,
Simple in shew, and voide of malice bad;
And all the way he prayed, as he went,
And often knockt his brest, as one that did repent.

XXX.

He faire the knight saluted, louting low,
Who faire him quited, as that courteous was;

And after asked him, if he did know
Of straunge adventures, which abroad did pas.
"Ah! my dear sonne," quoth he, "how should, alas!
Silly old man, that lives in hidden cell,
Bidding his beades all day for his trespás,
Tydings of warre and worldly trouble tell?
With holy father sits not with such thinges to mell.

XXXI.

"But if of daunger, which hereby doth dwell,
And homebredd evil ye desire to heare,
Of a straunge man I can you tidings tell,
That wasteth all this countrie farre and neare."
"Of such," saide he, "I chiefly doe inquere;
And shall thee well rewarde to shew the place,
In which that wicked wight his dayes doth weare:
For to all knighthood it is foule disgrace,
That such a cursed creature lives so long a space."

XXXII.

"Far hence," quoth he, "in wastfull wildernesse
His dwelling is, by which no living wight
May ever passe, but thorough great distresse."
"Now," saide the ladie, "draweth toward night;
And well I wote, that of your later fight
Ye all forwearied be; for what so strong,
But, wanting rest, will also want of might?
The sunne, that measures heaven all day long,
At night doth baite his steedes the ocean waves emong.

XXXIII.

"Then with the sunne take, Sir, your timely rest,
And with new day new worke at once begin:
Untroubled night, they say, gives counsell best."
"Right well, Sir Knight, ye have advised bin,"
Quoth then that aged man; "the way to win
Is wisely to advise. Now day is spent:
Therefore with me ye may take up your in
For this same night." The knight was well content
So with that godly father to his home they went.

XXXIV.

A little lowly hermitage it was,
Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side,
Far from resort of people, that did pas
In traveill to and fro: a little wyde
There was an holy chappell edifyde,
Wherein the hermite dewly wont to say
His holy things each morne and eventyde:
Thereby a christall streame did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway.

XXXV.

Arrived there, the litle house they fill,
Ne looke for entertainement, where none was;
Rest is their feast, and all thinges at their will.
The noblest mind the best contentment has.
With faire discourse the evening so they pas;
For that olde man of pleasing wordes had store,

And well could file his tongue, as smooth as glas:
He told of saintes and popes, and evermore
He strowd an Ave-Mary after and before.

CANTO III.

I.

Nought is there under heavn's wide hollownesse,
That moves more deare compassion of mind,
Then beautie brought t'unworthie wretchednesse
Through envies snares, or fortunes freakes unkind.
I, whether lately through her brightnes blynd,
Or through alleageance, and fast feälty,
Which I do owe unto all womankynd,
Feele my hart perst with so great agony,
When such I see, that all for pitty I could dy.

II.

And now it is empassioned so deepe,
For fairest Unaes sake, of whom I sing,
That my frayle eies these lines with teares do steepe,
To thinke how she through guyleful handeling,
Though true as touch, though daughter of a king,
Though faire as ever living wight was fayre,
Though nor in word nor deede ill meriting,
Is from her knight divorced in despayre,
And her dew loves deryv'd to that vile witches shayre.

III.

Yet she, most faithfull ladie, all this while
Forsaken, wofull, solitarie mayd,
Far from all peoples preace, as in exile,
In wildernesse and wastfull deserts strayd,
To seeke her knight; who, subtily betrayd [wrought,
Through that late vision which th' enchaunter
Had her abandond; she of nought afrayd,
Through woods and wastnes wide him daily sought,
Yet wished tydinges none of him unto her brought.

IV.

One day, nigh wearie of the yrkesome way,
From her unhastie beast she did alight;
And on the grasse her dainty limbs did lay
In secrete shadow, far from all mens sight;
From her fayre head her fillet she undight,
And layd her stole aside; Her angels face,
As the great eye of heaven, shyned bright,
And made a sunshine in the shady place;
Did never mortall eye behold such heavenly grace.

V.

It fortuned, out of the thickest wood
A ramping lyon rushed suddeinly,
Hunting full greedy after salvage blood;
Soone as the royall virgin he did spy,
With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,
To have attonce devourd her tender corse;

But to the pray when as he drew more ny,
His bloody rage aswaged with remorse,
And, with the sight amazd, forgat his furious forse.

VI.

Instead thereof, he kist her wearie feet,
And lickt her lilly hands with fawning tong;
As he her wronged innocence did weet.
O how can beautie maister the most strong,
And simple truth subdue avenging wrong!
Whose yielded pryde and proud submission,
Still dreading death, when she had marked long,
Her hart gan melt in great compassion;
And drizling teares did shed for pure affection.

VII.

"The lyon, lord of everie beast in field,"
Quoth she, "his princely puissance doth abate,
And mightie proud to humble weake does yield,
Forgetfull of the hungry rage, which late
Him prickt, in pittie of my sad estate:—
But he, my lyon, and my noble lord,
How does he find in cruell hart to hate
Her, that him lov'd, and ever most adord
As the god of my life? why hath he me abhord?"

VIII.

Redounding teares did choke th' end of her plaint,
Which softly ecchoed from the neighbour wood;
And, sad to see her sorrowfull constraint,

The kingly beast upon her gazing stood;
With pittie calmd, downe fell his angry mood.
At last, in close hart shutting up her payne,
Arose the virgin, borne of heavenly brood,
And to her snowy palfrey got agayne,
To seeke her strayed champion if she might attayne.

IX.

The lyon would not leave her desolate,
But with her went along, as a strong gard
Of her chast person, and a faythfull mate
Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard;
Still, when she slept, he kept both watch and ward;
And, when she wakt, he wayted diligent,
With humble service to her will prepard:
From her fayre eyes he took commandëment,
And ever by her lookes conceived her intent.

From

THE SECOND BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QUEENE.

Contayning the Legend of Sir Guyon or of Temperaunce.

CANTO XII.

X.

So forth they rowed; and that ferryman
With his stiffe oares did brush the sea so strong,
That the hoare waters from his frigot ran,
And the light bubles daunced all along,
Whiles the salt brine out of the billowes sprong.

At last, far off, they many islandes spy
On every side floting the floodes emong:
Then said the knight; "Lo! I the land descry;
Therefore, old syre, thy course doe thereunto apply."

XI.

"That may not bee," said then the ferryman,
"Least wee unweeting hap to be fordonne:
For those same islands, seeming now and than,
Are not firme land, nor any certein wonne,
But stragling plots, which to and fro doe ronne
In the wide waters: therefore are they hight
The Wandring Islands: therefore doe them shonne;
For they have oft drawne many a wandring wight
Into most deadly daunger and distressed plight.

XII.

"Yet well they seeme to him, that farre doth vew,
Both faire and fruitfull, and the grownd dispred
With grassy greene of délectable hew;
And the tall trees with leaves appareled
Are deckt with blossoms dyde in white and red,
That mote the passengers thereto allure;
But whosoever once hath fastened
His foot thereon, may never it recure,
But wandreth evermore uncertein and unsure."

From

THE FIFTH BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QUEENE.

Contayning the Legend of Artegall or of Justice.

CANTO II.

XXX.

THERE they beheld a mighty gyant stand
Upon a rocke, and holding forth on hie
An huge great paire of ballaunce in his hand,
With which he boasted in his surquedrie
That all the world he would weigh equallie,
If ought he had the same to counterpoys:
For want whereof he weighed vanity,
And fild his ballaunce full of idle toys:
Yet was admired much of fooles, women, and boys.

XXXI.

He sayd that he would all the earth uptake
And all the sea, divided each from either:
So would he of the fire one ballaunce make,
And one of th' ayre, without or wind or wether:
Then would he ballaunce heaven and hell together,
And all that did within them all containe;
Of all whose weight he would not misse a fether:
And looke what surplus did of each remaine,
He would to his owne part restore the same againe.

XXXII.

For why, he sayd, they all unequall were,
And had encroched uppon others share;
Like as the sea (which plaine he shewed there)
Had worne the earth; so did the fire the aire;
So all the rest did others parts empaire:
And so were realmes and nations run awry.
All which he undertooke for to repaire,
In sort as they were formed aunciently;
And all things would reduce into equality.

XXXIII.

Therefore the vulgar did about him flocke,
And cluster thicke unto his leasings vaine;
Like foolish flies about an hony-crocke;
In hope by him great benefite to gaine,
And uncontrolled freedome to obtaine.
All which when Artegall did see and heare,
How he misled the simple peoples traine,
In sdeignfull wize he drew unto him neare,
And thus unto him spake, without regard or feare;

XXXIV.

"Thou, that presum'st to weigh the world anew,
And all things to an equall to restore,
Instead of right me seemes great wrong dost shew,
And far above thy forces pitch to sore:
For, ere thou limit what is lesse or more
In every thing, thou oughtest first to know

What was the poyse of every part of yore:
And looke then, how much it doth overflow
Or faile thereof, so much is more then iust to trow.

XXXV.

"For at the first they all created were
In goodly measure by their Makers might;
And weighed out in ballaunces so nere,
That not a dram was missing of their right:
The earth was in the middle centre pight,
In which it doth immoveable abide,
Hemd in with waters like a wall in sight,
And they with aire, that not a drop can slide:
Al which the heavens containe, and in their courses guide.

XXXVI.

"Such heavenly iustice doth among them raine,
That every one doe know their certaine bound;
In which they doe these many yeares remaine,
And mongst them al no change hath yet beene found:
But if thou now shouldst weigh them new in pound,
We are not sure they would so long remaine:
All change is perillous, and all chaunce unsound.
Therefore leave off to weigh them all againe,
Till we may be assur'd they shall their course retaine.'

XXXVII.

"Thou foolishe elfe," said then the gyant wroth,
"Seest not how badly all things present bee,

And each estate quite out of order goth?
The sea itselfe doest thou not plainely see
Encroch uppon the land there under thee?
And th' earth itselfe how daily its increast
By all that dying to it turned be?
Were it not good that wrong were then surceast,
And from the most that some were given to the least?

XXXVIII.

"Therefore I will throw downe these mountains hie,
And make them levell with the lowly plaine,
These towring rocks, which reach unto the skie,
I will thrust downe into the deepest maine,
And, as they were, them equalize againe.
Tyrants, that make men subiect to their law,
I will suppresse, that they no more may raine;
And lordings curbe that commons over-aw;
And all the wealth of rich men to the poore will draw."

XXXIX.

"Of things unseene how canst thou deeme aright,"
Then answered the righteous Artegall,
"Sith thou misdeem'st so much of things in sight?
What though the sea with waves continuall
Doe eate the earth, it is no more at all;
Ne is the earth the lesse, or loseth ought:
For whatsoever from one place doth fall
Is with the tyde unto another brought:
For there is nothing lost, that may be found if sought.

XL.

"Likewise the earth is not augmented more
By all that dying into it doe fade;
For of the earth they formed were of yore:
However gay their blossome or their blade
Doe flourish now, they into dust shall vade.
What wrong then is it if that when they die
They turne to that whereof they first were made?
All in the powre of their great Maker lie:
All creatures must obey the voice of the Most Hie.

XLI.

"They live, they die, like as He doth ordaine,
Ne ever any asketh reason why.
The hils doe not the lowly dales disdaine;
The dales doe not the lofty hils envy.
He maketh kings to sit in soverainty;
He maketh subiects to their powre obay;
He pulleth downe, He setteth up on hy;
He gives to this, from that He takes away:
For all we have is His: what He list doe, He may.

XLII.

"Whatever thing is done, by Him is donne,
Ne any may His mighty will withstand;
Ne any may His soveraine power shonne,
Ne loose that He hath bound with stedfast band:
In vaine therefore doest thou now take in hand
To call to count, or weigh His workes anew,

Whose counsels depth thou canst not understand;
Sith of things subiect to thy daily vew
Thou doest not know the causes nor their courses dew.

XLIII.

"For take thy ballaunce, if thou be so wise,
And weigh the winde that under heaven doth blow;
Or weigh the light that in the east doth rise;
Or weigh the thought that from mans mind doth flow:
But if the weight of these thou canst not show,
Weigh but one word which from thy lips doth fall:
For how canst thou those greater secrets know,
That doest not know the least thing of them all?
Ill can he rule the great that cannot reach the small."

From

EPITHALAMION.

Wake now, my Love, awake! for it is time:
The rosy Morne long since left Tithons bed,
All ready to her silver coche to clyme,
And Phoebus gins to shew his glorious hed.
Hark! how the cheerfull birds do chaunt theyre laies,
And carroll of loves praise:
The merry larke hir mattins sings aloft;
The thrush replyes; the mavis descant playes;
The ouzell shrills; the ruddock warbles soft;
So goodly all agree, with sweet consent,
To this dayes meriment.

Ah! my deere Love, why doe ye sleepe thus long,
When meeter were that ye should now awake,
T' awayt the comming of your ioyous make,
And hearken to the birds love-learned song,
The deawy leaves among!
For they of ioy and pleasance to you sing,
That all the woods them answer, and theyr eccho ring.

My love is now awake out of her dreame,
And her fayre eyes, like stars that dimmed were
With darksome cloudes now shew theyre goodly beams
More bright then Hesperus his head doth rere.
Come now, ye damzels, daughters of delight,
Helpe quickly her to dight.
But first come, ye fayre Houres, which were begot,
In Ioves sweet paradice, of Day and Night,
Which doe the seasons of the year allot,
And al that ever in this world is fayre
Do make and still repayre:
And ye three handmayds of the Cyprian Queene,
The which doe still adorn her beauties pride,
Helpe to adorne my beautifullest bride:
And, as ye her array, still throw betweene
Some graces to be seene;
And, as ye use to Venus, to her sing,
The whiles the woods shal answer, and your eccho ring.

Now is my love all ready forth to come;
Let all the virgins therefore well awayt,
And ye fresh boyes, that tend upon her groome,

Prepare your selves, for he is comming strayt.
Set all your things in seemly good aray,
Fit for so ioyfull day,
The ioyfulst day that ever sunne did see.
Fair Sun! shew forth thy favourable ray,
And let thy lifull heat not fervent be,
For feare of burning her sunshyny face,
Her beauty to disgrace.
O Fayrest Phoebus! Father of the Muse!
If ever I did honour thee aright,
Or sing the thing that mote thy mind delight,
Doe not thy servants simple boone refuse,
But let this day, let this one day, be mine;
Let all the rest be thine.
Then I thy soverayne prayses loud wil sing,
That all the woods shal answer, and theyr eccho ring.

Harke! how the minstrels gin to shrill aloud
Their merry musick that resounds from far,
The pipe, the tabor, and the trembling croud,
That well agree withouten breach or iar.
But most of all the damzels doe delite,
When they their tymbrels smyte,
And thereunto doe daunce and carrol sweet,
That all the sences they doe ravish quite;
The whyles the boyes run up and downe the street,
Crying aloud with strong confused noyce,
As if it were one voyce;
"Hymen, Io Hymen, Hymen," they do shout;
That even to the heavens theyr shouting shrill

Doth reach, and all the firmament doth fill;
To which the people, standing all about,
As in approvance, doe thereto applaud,
And loud advaunce her laud;
And evermore they "Hymen, Hymen," sing,
That all the woods them answer, and theyr eccho ring.

Loe! where she comes along with portly pace,
Lyke Phoebe, from her chamber of the East,
Arysing forth to run her mighty race,
Clad all in white, that seems a virgin best.
So well it her beseems, that ye would weene
Some angell she had beene.
Her long loose yellow locks lyke golden wyre,
Sprinckled with perle, and perling flowers atweene,
Doe lyke a golden mantle her attyre,
And, being crowned with a girland greene,
Seeme lyke some mayden queene.
Her modest eyes, abashed to behold
So many gazers as on her do stare,
Upon the lowly ground affixed are,
Ne dare lift up her countenance too bold,
But blush to heare her prayses sung so loud,—
So farre from being proud.
Nathless, doe ye still loud her prayses sing,
That all the woods may answer, and your eccho ring.

* * * *

Open the temple gates unto my Love,
Open them wide that she may enter in,

And all the postes adorne as doth behove,
And all the pillours deck with girlands trim,
For to receyve this saynt with honour dew,
That commeth in to you.
With trembling steps, and humble reverence,
She commeth in before th' Almighties view:
Of her, ye virgins, learne obedience,
When so ye come into those holy places,
To humble your proud faces.
Bring her up to th' high altar, that she may
The sacred ceremonies there partake,
The which so endlesse matrimony make;
And let the roring organs loudly play
The praises of the Lord in lively notes;
The whiles, with hollow throats,
The choristers the ioyous antheme sing,
That all the woods may answer, and their eccho ring.

Behold, whiles she before the altar stands,
Hearing the holy priest that to her speakes
And blesseth her with his two happy hands,
How the red roses flush up in her cheekes,
And the pure snow with goodly vermill stayne,
Like crimsin dyde in grayne:
That even the angels, which continually
About the sacred altar doe remaine,
Forget their service and about her fly,
Ofte peeping in her face, that seems more fayre
The more they on it stare.
But her sad eyes, still fastened on the ground,

Are governed with goodly modesty,
That suffers not one look to glaunce awry,
Which may let in a little thought unsownd.
Why blush ye, Love, to give to me your hand,
The pledge of all our band?
Sing, ye sweet angels, Alleluya sing,
That all the woods may answere, and your eccho ring.

Now al is done; bring home the bride againe;
Bring home the triumph of our victory;
Bring home with you the glory of her gaine,
With ioyance bring her and with iollity.
Never had man more ioyfull day than this,
Whom heaven would heape with blis.
Make feast therefore now all this live-long day;
This day for ever to me holy is.

* * * *

Song, made in lieu of many ornaments
With which my Love should duly have been dect,
Which cutting off through hasty accidents,
Ye would not stay your dew time to expect,
But promist both to recompens,
Be unto her a goodly ornament,
And for short time an endlesse moniment!

From

THE SHEPHEARDES CALENDER.

MARCH.

Willye — Thomalin.

Tho. It was upon a holiday,
When shepheardes groomes han leave to playe,
I cast to goe a shooting;
Long wandring up and downe the land,
With bowe and bolts in either hand,
For birds in bushes tooting,
At length within the yvie todde,
(There shrouded was the little God,)
I heard a busie bustling.
I bent my bolt against the bush,
Listening if any thing did rushe,
But then heard no more rustling:
Tho, peeping close into the thicke,
Might see the moving of some quicke,
Whose shape appeared not;
But were it faerie, feend or snake,
My courage earnd it to awake,
And manfully thereat shotte.
With that sprang forth a naked swayne,
With spotted wings, like Peacocks trayne,
And laughing lope to a tree;
His gylden quiver at his backe,
And silver bowe, which was but slacke,
Which lightly he bent at me.

That seeing, I levelde againe,
And shotte at him with might and maine,
As thicke as it had hayled.
So long I shott that al was spent;
Tho pumie stones I hastly hent,
And threwe: but nought availed:
He was so wimble and so wight,
From bough to bough he lepped light,
And oft the pumies latched.
Therewith affrayd, I ranne away;
But he, that earst seemd but to playe,
A shaft in earnest snatched,
And hit me running in the heele.
For then, I little smart did feele;
But soone it sore encreased,
And now it ranckleth more and more,
And inwardly it festreth sore,
Ne wote how to cease it.
Wil. Thomalin, I pittie thy plight;
Perdie, with Love thou diddest fight;
I know him by a token:
For once I heard my father say,
How he him caught upon a day,
(Whereof he wilbe wroken,)
Entangled in a fowling net,
Which he for carrion crowes had set
That in our peere-tree haunted:
Tho sayd he was a winged lad,
But bowe and shafts as then none had,
Els had he sore be daunted.

But see, the welkin thicks apace,
And stouping Phoebus steepes his face:
Yts time to haste us homeward.

WILLYES EMBLEM.

To be wise, and eke to love,
Is graunted scarce to gods above.

THOMALINS EMBLEME.

Of honye and of gaule in love there is store;
The honye is much, but the gaule is more.

From

THE SHEPHEARDES CALENDER.

JULY.

Thomalin — Morrell.

Is not thilke same a goteheard prowde,
That sittes on yonder bancke,
Whose straying heard them selfe doth shrowde
Emong the bushes rancke?
Mor. What ho, thou jollye shepheardes swayne,
Come up the hill to me;
Better is then the lowly playne,
Als for thy flocke and thee.
Thom. Ah, God shield, man, that I should clime,
And learne to looke alofte;
This reede is ryfe, that oftentime
Great clymbers fall unsoft.

In humble dales is footing fast,
The trode is not so tickle;
And though one fall through heedless hast,
Yet is his misse not mickle.
And now the sonne hath reared up
His fyrie-footed teme,
Making his way between the Cuppe
And golden Diademe;
The rampant Lyon hunts he fast,
With dogge of noysome breath,
Whose baleful barking brings in hast
Payne, plagues, and dreery death.
Against his cruell scortching heate,
Where hast thou coverture?
The wastefull hylls unto his threate
Is a playne overture.
But, if thee lust to holden chat
With seely shepheardes swayne,
Come downe, and learne the little what
That Thomalin can sayne.

AMORETTI.

IX.

Long-while I sought to what I might compare
Those powrefull eies which lighten my dark spright,
Yet find I naught on earth, to which I dare
Resemble th' ymage of their goodly light.

Not to the sun, for they do shine by night;
Nor to the moone, for they are changed never;
Nor to the starres, for they have purer sight;
Nor to the fire, for they consume not ever;
Nor to the lightning, for they still persever;
Nor to the diamond, for they are more tender;
Nor unto cristall, for naught may them sever;
Nor unto glass, such baseness mought offend her.
Then to the Maker selfe they likest be,
Whose light doth lighten all that here we see.

XV.

Ye tradefull Merchants, that, with weary toyle,
Do seeke most pretious things to make your gain,
And both the Indias of their treasure spoile,
What needeth you to seeke so farre in vaine?
For loe, my Love doth in herselfe containe
All this worlds riches that may farre be found:
If saphyres, loe, her eies be saphyres plaine;
If rubies, loe, hir lips be rubies sound;
If pearles, hir teeth be pearles, both pure and round,
If yvorie, her forhead yvory weene;
If gold, her locks are finest gold on ground;
If silver, her faire hands are silver sheene:
But that which fairest is but few behold:—
Her mind, adorned with vertues manifold.

From

MOTHER HUBBERD'S TALE.

Most miserable man, whom wicked fate
Hath brought to court, to sue for had-ywist,
That few have found, and manie one hath mist!
Full little knowest thou that hast not tride,
What hell it is in suing long to bide:
To loose good dayes, that might be better spent;
To wast long nights in pensive discontent;
To speed to day, to be put back to morrow;
To feed on hope, to pine with feare and sorrow;
To have thy Princes grace, yet want her Peeres;
To have thy asking, yet waite manie yeeres;
To fret thy soule with crosses and with cares;
To eate thy heart through comfortlesse dispaires;
To fawne, to crowche, to waite, to ride, to ronne,
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.
Unhappie wight, borne to disastrous end,
That doth his life in so long tendance spend!
Who ever leaves sweete home, where meane estate
In safe assurance, without strife or hate,
Findes all things needfull for contentment meeke,
And will to court for shadows vaine to seeke,
Or hope to gaine, himselfe will a daw trie:
That curse God send unto mine enemie!

III. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

1564–1616.

In the presence of the third great English poet, Chaucer and Spenser are like courtiers in waiting upon royalty. Of lofty rank themselves, they stand aside in the presence of Shakespeare with "the bays which crowned him Poet first, then Poets' King." Chaucer had been dead one hundred and sixty-four years, and Spenser was a boy at the Merchant Taylors' School, when in 1564 this "king" was born, not, like them, in the great, hurrying, growing city of London, but on the quiet banks of the Avon, at Stratford, the Street-of-the-ford, in Warwickshire, the great historic heart of England. When the parish register was brought out and some scribe wrote in it, "Baptism, 1564 April 26, Gulielmus, Filius Johannes Shakespeare," no one dreamed that he was recording the christening of a king.

This baby was only the child of a burgess of the town, a wool dealer, prosperous indeed and having "landes and tenements of good worth and substance," but of importance only among his neighbors. This John Shakespeare, a sturdy Saxon yeoman, had married a gentlewoman, Mary Arden, — young, gently born and bred, an heiress, descendant of a great Warwickshire family, but not herself of noble rank; yet their son, by the supreme right of genius, was to reign for centuries king over the great realm of English literature. While he was a boy his father prospered and became mayor of Stratford, or, in the language of the day, "Baylyffe of this Borowghe of Stratford and Liberties thereof," though

he could not write his own name; but before very long misfortunes overtook him and he lost his money and his offices.

Meanwhile his little son had been growing up, going to Edward the Sixth's "King's New School of Stratford-upon-Avon"; wandering about the woods of Arden north of the river, or the green fields to the south, and learning his love of nature from her face; playing pranks with the boys of the town; deer-stealing in Charlecote Park (for he was "much given to all unluckinesse in stealing venison and rabbits"); finding his way across the fields to the hamlet of Shottery and there marrying Anne Hathaway when he was only eighteen years old; studying perhaps for a time in a lawyer's office, and at length, a few years later, leaving his wife and three little children, his father and mother and friends, and going up to seek his fortune in the city of London. Some people say he went away to escape punishment for the deer-stealing; others that the deer-stealing and the school-going and the law-studying and the stories of his boyhood are legends, and that we know only that he went away, probably to earn money for the care of his family and to help his father. At all events he did go, he did gain a fortune, and with it "honor, love, obedience, troops of friends."

In six years the Warwickshire boy of twenty-two who came up to London penniless was a prosperous and even a famous man.

In eleven years he bought "New Place," the largest and finest house in the town of Stratford, for his home. In sixteen years he bought more lands and tithes in Stratford. In twenty-five years he came home to live there, and there in thirty years, probably on his birthday, certainly on the 23d of April, 1616, he died. There he was buried, and

there, to-day, any pilgrim who goes to this great shrine will see in the chancel of the church, sunk into the wall, the bust made by Gerard Johnson, a few years after Shakespeare's death, with the inscription:

IVDICIO PYLIVM, GENIO SOCRATEM, ARTE MARONEM.
TERRA TEGIT, POPULUS MAERET, OLYMPUS HABET.

Stay passenger, why goest thov by so fast?
Read if thov canst, whome enviovs death hath plast
Within this Monvment; Shakespeare with whome
Qvicke natvre dide, whose name doth decke $^{s}_{v}$ Tombe
Far more than cost, sith all $^{t}_{y}$ he hath writt
Leaves living art bvt page to serve his witt

Obiit Ano Do^{i} 1616
Ætatis 53. Die 23. Ap.

A flat stone in the floor, a little away from the wall, covers the grave, and has these famous lines, which have kept it untouched for nearly three centuries:

GOOD FREND FOR IESUS SAKE FORBEARE
TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOASED HEARE.
BLESTE BE $^{E}_{Y}$ MAN $^{T}_{Y}$ SPARES THES STONES
AND CVRST BE HE $^{T}_{Y}$ MOVES MY BONES.

But how did the unknown boy from Stratford become what Victor Hugo calls "the chief glory of England"? When he came up to London it was not to find, like Chaucer and Spenser, a welcome at court, and offices and honors to meet him. He came to join a company of actors, who at that time were thought of little account, and who have been called, among other not very flattering names, "The Caterpillars of the Commonwealth." These actors had just begun to have a theater of their own in London, which, rude as it

was, open to the sky and with none of the stage dressings that we have now, was a great improvement on their old plan of strolling about the country under the protection of some nobleman, playing in inn-yards on scaffolds built in the open air.

At first, so the story goes, Shakespeare only held the horses outside the door for the gentlemen who came "riding into the fieldes, plays to behold," but soon he began to act for himself, probably in some very humble way. Soon, again, he was not only acting, but rewriting old plays to be acted by the company. Then at last he began to write his own wonderful plays, and England had found her great dramatic poet.

For four hundred years before Shakespeare there had been plays in England, — stories from the Bible called "Mysteries" or "Miracle Plays," acted upon platforms drawn about the streets; allegories called "Moralities," in which the virtues and vices, like Gluttony, Good-Deeds, Temperance, etc., took the place of real people; and then interludes, — short farces, meant to be played in the intervals of a banquet. But suddenly, like a splendid flower upon a rough stem, what is called the "Elizabethan Drama" blossomed out, and the English stage became glorious and famous.

Ben Jonson, Marlowe, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Ford, and Webster, and a score of others were soon busily at work; but the star of Shakespeare's genius shines high above them all. The young Earl of Southampton came to know and admire him, and Shakespeare dedicated his "Venus and Adonis," which he called the first heir of his invention, to him. So, with good friends about him; soon owning shares in the Black Friars Theater and the Globe Theater and growing to be rich and prosperous; seeing his plays performed before Queen Elizabeth, with Burbadge, the great

actor, in their leading parts, while he himself played in some of the minor ones; taking part in the triumphal procession of King James the First from London Tower to Westminster; going down often to his home at Stratford; writing, acting, working, he spent the twenty-five brilliant, stirring years of his London life, and then, in ease and honor, went back for five quiet yet still busy years at Stratford, with his wife and daughters and sons-in-law, and his one little grandchild, Elizabeth.

In the thirty years from 1586 to 1616 Shakespeare wrote three poems, "Venus and Adonis," "Lucrece," and the "Passionate Pilgrim," one hundred and fifty-four sonnets, and thirty-seven dramas, and these are some of the titles which he gained:

From Spenser, — "The man whom nature self had made to mock herself and truth to imitate."

From Ben Jonson, — "Soul of the age, the applause, delight, the wonder of our stage,"
"Sweet swan of Avon,"
"Thou starre of poets,"
"Not of an age, but for all time."

From Otway, — "The happiest poet of his time, and best."

From Milton, — "Dear son of Memory, great Heir of Fame,"
"Sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child."

From Dryden, — "The divine Shakespeare."

From Lamb, — "Our sweetest Shakespeare."

From Coleridge, — "The thousand-souled Shakespeare."

From Victor Hugo, — "Shakespeare, the chief glory of England."

Douglas Jerrold, the witty Englishman, says about critics of Shakespeare: "They are like people who write with diamonds upon glass, and only obscure the light," and

certainly, although many hundreds of books have been written on Shakespeare, nothing can teach us about him as he does himself. We must read the great tragedies themselves, — "Hamlet," "Macbeth," "Othello," "King Lear"; the great histories — "King John," "Henry IV.," "Henry V.," "King Richard III.," and the third part of "King Henry VI.," thought to be his first play; the great comedies, — "The Merchant of Venice," "As You Like It," "Twelfth Night," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and "The Tempest," said to be his last play. One book, however, all young people ought to own, and that is Charles and Mary Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare." It is a classic in itself, and lets us into the secret of the plots and tells us the story of some of the plays in such a charming way as to make us only more anxious to read them, and to realize with Lamb his wish that "the plays may prove enrichers of the fancy; strengtheners of virtue; a withdrawing from all selfish and mercenary thoughts; a lesson of all sweet and honorable thoughts and actions to teach us courtesy, benignity, generosity, humanity, for of examples teaching these virtues Shakespeare's pages are full."

SONNETS.

XXIX.

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf Heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, — and then my state
(Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth) sings hymns at Heaven's gate:
For thy sweet love remember'd, such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

XXX.

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear times' waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,

And weep afresh love's long-since-cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight.
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restor'd, and sorrows end.

LII.

So am I as the rich, whose blessed key
Can bring him to his sweet up-locked treasure,
The which he will not every hour survey,
For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.
Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
Since seldom coming, in the long year set,
Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,
Or captain jewels in the carcanet.
So is the time that keeps you, as my chest,
Or as the wardrobe, which the robe doth hide,
To make some special instant special-blest,
By new unfolding his imprison'd pride.
Blessed are you, whose worthiness gives scope,
Being had, to triumph, being lack'd, to hope.

LXXIII.

That time of year thou may'st in me behold,
When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

In me thou seest the twilight of such day
  As after sunset fadeth in the west;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
  Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
  That on the ashes of his youth doth lie;
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
  Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

CXVI.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
  Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds;
  Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
  That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
  Whose worth 's unknown, although his height be
    taken.
Love 's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
  Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
  But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error, and upon me prov'd,
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

SONGS.

From

CYMBELINE.

Song to Imogen.

Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phœbus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chalic'd flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin to ope their golden eyes;
With every thing that pretty is — my lady sweet, arise;
Arise, arise.

Song of Arviragus and Guiderius.

Gui. Fear no more the heat of the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Arv. Fear no more the frown o' the great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke,
Care no more to clothe, and eat;

To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Gui. Fear no more the lightning-flash;
Arv. Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone:
Gui. Fear not slander, censure rash:
Arv. Thou hast finish'd joy and moan:
Both. All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

Gui. No exorciser harm thee!
Arv. Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Gui. Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Arv. Nothing ill come near thee!
Both. Quiet consummation have:
And renowned be thy grave!

From

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

Fairy's Song.

Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough briar,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander every where,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green:

The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours:
I must go seek some dew-drops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits, I'll be gone;
Our queen and all her elves come here anon.

Fairies' Song.

I.

You spotted snakes, with double tongue,
Thorny hedge-hogs, be not seen;
Newts, and blind-worms, do no wrong:
Come not near our fairy queen.

Chorus.

Philomel, with melody,
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby;
Never harm, nor spell nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So, good night, with lullaby.

II.

Weaving spiders, come not here;
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence;
Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm, nor snail, do no offence.

Chorus.

Philomel, with melody,
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby;
Never harm, nor spell nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So, good night, with lullaby.

From

A WINTER'S TALE.

Songs of Autolycus.

I.

Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,
And merrily hent the stile-a:
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.

II.

Lawn, as white as driven snow;
Cyprus, black as e'er was crow;
Gloves, as sweet as damask roses;
Masks for faces, and for noses;
Bugle bracelet, necklace-amber;
Perfume for a lady's chamber;
Golden quoifs, and stomachers,
For my lads to give their dears;

Pins, and poking sticks of steel,
What maids lack from head to heel;
Come, buy of me, come; come buy, come buy,
Buy, lads, or else your lasses cry: come, buy.

III.

Will you buy any tape,
Or lace for your cape,
My dainty duck, my dear-a?
Any silk, any thread,
Any toys for your head,
Of the new'st, and fin'st, fin'st, wear-a?
Come to the pedlar;
Money 's a medler,
That doth utter all men's ware-a.

From

TWELFTH NIGHT.

Clown's Song.

Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O prepare it;
My part of death no one so true
Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be strown;
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown.
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O, where
Sad true lover never find my grave,
To weep there.

From

HAMLET.

Songs of Ophelia.

I.

How should I your true love know
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.

He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.

II.

And will he not come again?
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead,

Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll:
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan;
Gramercy on his soul!

From

HENRY VIII.

Song.

Orpheus with his lute made trees,
And the mountain-tops, that freeze,
Bow themselves, when he did sing:
To his music, plants and flowers
Ever sprung; as sun, and showers,
There had made a lasting spring.

Every thing that heard him play,
Even the billows of the sea,
Hung their heads, and then lay by.
In sweet music is such art:
Killing care, and grief of heart,
Fall asleep, or, hearing, die.

From

THE TEMPEST.

Songs of Ariel.

I.

Come unto these yellow sands,
  And then take hands:
Court'sied when you have and kiss'd
  (The wild waves whist,)
Foot it featly here and there;
And sweet sprites, the burthen bear,
  Hark, hark!

II.

Full fathom five thy father lies,
  Of his bones are coral made,
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
  Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
  [Burthen, ding-dong.]
Hark! now I hear them, — ding-dong, bell.

III.

Where the bee sucks, there suck I;
In a cowslip's bell I lie:
There I couch when owls do cry.
On the bat's back I do fly,
After summer, merrily:

Merrily, merrily, shall I live now,
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

Wedding Song.

Juno.

Honour, riches, marriage-blessing,
Long continuance, and increasing,
Hourly joys be still upon you!
Juno sings her blessings on you.

Ceres.

Earth's increase, foison plenty,
Barns and garners never empty;
Vines, with clust'ring bunches growing;
Plants, with goodly burthen bowing;
Spring come to you, at the farthest,
In the very end of harvest!
Scarcity, and want, shall shun you;
Ceres' blessing so is on you.

From

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

Song.

Who is Silvia? what is she,
That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise is she,
The heavens such grace did lend her,
That she might admired be.

Is she kind as she is fair?
For beauty lives with kindness:
Love doth to her eyes repair,
To help him of his blindness;
And, being help'd, inhabits there.

Then to Silvia let us sing,
That Silvia is excelling:
She excels each mortal thing,
Upon the dull earth dwelling:
To her let us garlands bring.

From

AS YOU LIKE IT.

Songs of Amiens.

I.

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither;
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather.

II.

Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,

And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither;
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather.

SONG.

I.

BLOW, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh, ho! sing heigh, ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly!
Then, heigh, ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

II.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not.
Heigh, ho! sing heigh, ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly!
Then, heigh, ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

DRAMAS.

MACBETH.

From

ACT I., SCENE VII.

Macbeth.

IF it were done, when 't is done, then 't were well
It were done quickly: if the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
With his surcease, success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We 'd jump the life to come. — But, in these cases,
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor: This even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He 's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues

Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off:
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or Heaven's cherubim, horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind. — I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,
And falls on the other. — [*Enter Lady Macbeth.*
How now, what news?

From

ACT II., SCENE I.

Macbeth — Servant.

Macb. Go, bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed. —
[*Exit Servant.*
Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come let me clutch thee: —
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling, as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind; a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.

Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
Or else worth all the rest: I see thee still;
And on thy blade, and dudgeon, gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. — There 's no such thing:
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes. — Now o'er the one half world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings; and wither'd murther,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl 's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. — Thou sure and firm set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
The very stones prate of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it. — Whiles I threat, he lives;
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.
(*A bell rings.*)
I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven or to hell. [*Exit.*

From

ACT V., SCENE V.

Macbeth — Seyton.

Macb. Hang out our banners on the outer walls;
The cry is still, *They come:* Our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn: here let them lie,

Till famine, and the ague, eat them up:
Were they not forced with those that should be ours,
We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home. What is that noise?

(*A cry within of women.*)

Sey. It is the cry of women, my good lord.

Macb. I have almost forgot the taste of fears:
The time has been, my senses would have cool'd
To hear a night-shriek; and my fell of hair
Would at a dismal treatise rouse, and stir
As life were in 't: I have supp'd full with horrors;
Direness, familiar to my slaught'rous thoughts,
Cannot once start me. — Wherefore was that cry?

Sey. The queen, my lord, is dead.

Macb. She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word. —
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life 's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing. —

HAMLET.

From

ACT I., SCENE III.

Polonius — Laertes.

Pol. Yet here, Laertes? aboard, aboard, for shame;
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are staid for: There, — my blessing with you:
(*Laying his hand on Laertes' head.*)
And these few precepts in thy memory
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,
Bear 't, that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice:
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy:
For the apparel oft proclaims the man;
And they in France, of the best rank and station,
Are most select and generous, chief in that.
Neither a borrower, nor a lender be:
For loan oft loses both itself and friend;

And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all, — To thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell; my blessing season this in thee!

From

ACT I., SCENE IV.

Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus.

The Platform.

Ham. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.
Hor. It is a nipping and an eager air.
Ham. What hour now?
Hor. I think, it lacks of twelve.
Mar. No, it is struck.
Hor. Indeed! I heard it not; it then draws near the season,
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.
(*A flourish of trumpets and ordnance shot off within.*)
What does this mean, my lord?
Ham. The king doth wake to-night, and takes his rouse,
Keeps wassels, and the swaggering up-spring reels;
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.
Hor. Is it a custom?
Ham. Ay, marry, is 't:
And to my mind, — though I am native here,

And to the manner born, — it is a custom
More honour'd in the breach, than the observance.
This heavy-headed revel, east and west,
Make us traduc'd, and tax'd of other nations:
They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase
Soil our addition; and, indeed it takes
From our achievements, though perform'd at height,
The pith and marrow of our attribute.
So, oft it chances in particular men,
That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As in their birth, (wherein they are not guilty,
Since nature cannot choose his origin,)
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason;
Or by some habit, that too much o'er-leavens
The form of plausive manners; — that these men,
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect;
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star, —
Their virtues else (be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo,)
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault: The dram of ill
Doth all the noble substance often dout,
To his own scandal.

Enter GHOST.

Hor. Look, my lord, it comes!

Ham. Angels and ministers of grace defend us! —
Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,

Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee; I 'll call thee, Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me:
Let me not burst in ignorance! but tell,
Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements! why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd,
Hath ope'd his ponderous and marble jaws,
To cast thee up again! What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel,
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature,
So horridly to shake our disposition,
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

Hor. It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone.

Mar. Look, with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removed ground:
But do not go with it.

Hor. No, by no means.

Ham. It will not speak; then I will follow it.

Hor. Do not, my lord.

Ham. Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee:
And, for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?
It waves me forth again; — I 'll follow it.

Hor. What, if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff,
That beetles o'er his base into the sea:
And there assume some other horrible form,
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason,
And draw you into madness? think of it:
The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain,
That looks so many fathoms to the sea,
And hears its roar beneath.

Ham. It wafts me still:
Go on, I'll follow thee.

Mar. You shall not go, my lord.

Ham. Hold off your hand.

Hor. Be rul'd, you shall not go.

Ham. My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve. —
(*Ghost beckons.*)
Still am I call'd; — unhand me, gentlemen; —
(*Breaking from them.*)
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me: —
I say, away: — Go on, I'll follow thee.
[*Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet.*

Hor. He waxes desperate with imagination.

Mar. Let's follow; 't is not fit thus to obey him.

Hor. Have after: — To what issue will this come?

Mar. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

Hor. Heaven will direct it.

Mar. Nay, let's follow him. [*Exeunt.*

From

ACT III., SCENE I.

Hamlet.

Ham. To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And, by opposing, end them?— To die,— to sleep,—
No more;—and, by a sleep, to say we end
The heart-ach, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to,— 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die,— to sleep;—
To sleep! perchance to dream;— ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect,
That makes calamity of so long life:
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life;
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will;

And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
And enterprises of great pith and moment,
With this regard, their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action. — Soft you, now!
The fair Ophelia: — Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

From

ACT III., SCENE II.

Enter HAMLET *and Certain Players.*

Ham. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier had spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much, your hand thus; but use all gently: for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul, to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings; who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows, and noise: I could have such a fellow whipped for o'er-doing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: Pray you, avoid it.

1 Play. I warrant your honour.

Ham. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'er-step not the modesty of nature: for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold, as 't were, the mirror up to nature; to shew virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure. Now this, overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one, must, in your allowance, o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players, that I have seen play, — and heard others praise, and that highly, — not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of christians, nor the gait of christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted, and bellowed, that I have thought some of Nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

1 Play. I hope, we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

Ham. O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns, speak no more than is set down for them: for there be of them, that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though, in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villainous; and shews a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready. [*Exeunt Players.*

OTHELLO.

From

ACT I., SCENE III.

Senate, Duke, Brabantio, Othello, Iago, et al.

Duke. Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you
Against the general enemy Ottoman.
I did not see you; welcome gentle signior;
(*To Brabantio.*)
We lack'd your counsel and your help to-night.

Bra. So did I yours: Good your grace, pardon me;
Neither my place, nor aught I heard of business,
Hath raised me from my bed; nor doth the general care
Take hold on me; for my particular grief
Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature,
That it engluts and swallows other sorrows,
And it is still itself.

Duke. Why, what's the matter?

Bra. My daughter! O my daughter!

Sen. Dead?

Bra. Ay, to me;
She is abus'd, stol'n from me, and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks:
For nature so preposterously to err,
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
Sans witchcraft could not —

Duke. Whoe'er he be, that, in this foul proceeding,
Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself,
And you of her, the bloody book of law

You shall yourself read in the bitter letter,
After your own sense; yea, though our proper son
Stood in your action.

Bra. Humbly I thank your grace.
Here is the man, this Moor; whom now, it seems,
Your special mandate, for the state affairs,
Hath hither brought.

All. We are very sorry for 't.

Duke. What, in your own part, can you say to this?
(*To Othello.*)

Bra. Nothing, but this is so.

Oth. Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
My very noble and approved good masters,—
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
It is most true; true, I have married her;
The very head and front of my offending
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,
And little bless'd with the soft phrase of peace;
For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
Till now, some nine moons wasted, they have us'd
Their dearest action in the tented field;
And little of this great world can I speak,
More than pertains to feats of broils and battle;
And therefore little shall I grace my cause,
In speaking for myself: Yet, by your gracious patience,
I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver
Of my whole course of love; what drugs, what charms,
What conjuration, and what mighty magic,
(For such proceeding I am charg'd withal,)
I won his daughter.

Bra. A maiden never bold;
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
Blush'd at herself; and she,—in spite of nature,
Of years, of country, credit, everything,—
To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on!
It is a judgment maim'd, and most imperfect,
That will confess perfection so could err
Against all rules of nature; and must be driven
To find out practices of cunning hell,
Why this should be. I therefore vouch again,
That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,
Or with some dram conjur'd to this effect,
He wrought upon her.

Duke. To vouch this, is no proof;
Without more wider and more overt test,
Than these thin habits, and poor likelihoods
Of modern seeming, do prefer against him.

1 Sen. But, Othello, speak:—
Did you, by indirect and forced courses
Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?
Or came it by request, and such fair question
As soul to soul affordeth?

Oth. I do beseech you,
Send for the lady to the Sagittary,
And let her speak of me before her father:
If you do find me foul in her report,
The trust, the office, I do hold of you,
Not only take away, but let your sentence
Even fall upon my life.

Duke. Fetch Desdemona hither.

Oth. Ancient, conduct them; you best know the place.— [*Exeunt Iago and attendants.*

And, till she come, as truly as to Heaven
I do confess the vices of my blood,
So justly to your grave ears I'll present
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,
And she in mine.

Duke. Say it, Othello.

Oth. Her father lov'd me; oft invited me;
Still question'd me the story of my life,
From year to year; the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I have pass'd.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
To the very moment that he bade me tell it.
Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents, by flood and field;
Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent, deadly breach;
Of being taken by the insolent foe,
And sold to slavery; of my redemption thence,
And portance. In my traveller's history
(Wherein of antres vast, and deserts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven,
It was my hint to speak), such was my process;
And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders. These things to hear,
Would Desdemona seriously incline:
But still the house affairs would draw her thence;

Which ever as she could with haste despatch,
She 'd come again, and with a greedy ear
Devour up my discourse : Which I observing,
Took once a pliant hour; and found good means
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart,
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
But not intentively: I did consent;
And often did beguile her of her tears,
When I did speak of some distressful stroke,
That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:
She swore, — In faith, 't was strange, 't was passing
strange;
'T was pitiful, 't was wondrous pitiful:
She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd
That Heaven had made her such a man: she thank'd
me,
And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her. Upon this hint, I spake;
She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd;
And I lov'd her, that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have us'd;
Here comes the lady, let her witness it.

From

ACT V., SCENE II.

Othello, Iago, Lodovico, Officers, et al.

Oth. Soft you; a word or two, before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know it;
No more of that: — I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak
Of one, that loved not wisely, but too well;
Of one, not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
Perplex'd in the extreme; of one, whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away,
Richer than all his tribe; of one, whose subdu'd eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinable gum: Set you down this;
And say, besides, — that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
Beat a Venetian, and traduc'd the state,
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
And smote him — thus.

(*Stabs himself.*)

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

From

ACT IV., SCENE I.

Duke, the Magnificoes, Portia, Nerissa, Shylock, Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, and others.

Duke. You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes:
And here, I take it, is the doctor come. —

Enter PORTIA, *dressed like a doctor of laws.*

Give me your hand: Came you from old Bellario?

Por. I did, my lord.

Duke. You are welcome: take your place.
Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question in the court?

Por. I am informed thoroughly of the cause.
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Por. Is your name Shylock?

Shy. Shylock is my name.

Por. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;
Yet in such rule, that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn you, as you do proceed. —
You stand within his danger, do you not?

(*To Antonio.*)

Ant. Ay, so he says.

Por. Do you confess the bond?

Ant. I do.

Por. Then must the Jew be merciful.

Shy. On what compulsion must I? tell me that.

Por. The quality of mercy is not strain'd;
It droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven,
Upon the place beneath; it is twice bless'd, —
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shews the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway,
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then shew likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this, —
That in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Shy. My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

Por. Is he not able to discharge the money?

Bass. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court;
Yea, twice the sum: if that will not suffice,
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart;

If this will not suffice, it must appear,
That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority:
To do a great right, do a little wrong;
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

Por. It must not be; there is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established:
'T will be recorded for a precedent;
And many an error, by the same example,
Will rush into the state: It cannot be.

Shy. A Daniel come to judgment — yea, a Daniel! —
O wise young judge, how do I honour thee!

Por. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

Shy. Here 't is, most reverend doctor, here it is.

Por. Shylock, there 's thrice thy money offer'd thee.

Shy. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven:
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice.

Por. Why, this bond is forfeit;
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart: — Be merciful;
Take thrice the money, bid me tear the bond.

Shy. When it is paid according to the tenour.
It doth appear, you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound: I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgment: by my soul I swear,

There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me. I stay here on my bond.
Ant. Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgment.
Por. Why, then, thus it is.
You must prepare your bosom for his knife.
Shy. O noble judge! O excellent young man!
Por. For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to the penalty,
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.
Shy. 'T is very true. O wise and upright judge!
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!
Por. Therefore lay bare your bosom.
Shy. Ay, his breast:
So says the bond, — Doth it not, noble judge? —
Nearest his heart, those are the very words.
Por. It is so. Are there balance here, to weigh
The flesh?
Shy. I have them ready.
Por. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.
Shy. Is it so nominated in the bond?
Por. It is not so express'd. But what of that?
'T were good you do so much for charity.
Shy. I cannot find it; 't is not in the bond.
Por. Come, merchant, have you anything to say?
Ant. But little; I am arm'd, and well prepared. —
Give me your hand, Bassanio; fare you well!
Grieve not, that I am fallen to this for you;

For herein fortune shews herself more kind
Than is her custom: it is still her use,
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye, and wrinkled brow,
An age of poverty; from which lingering penance
Of such a misery doth she cut me off.
Commend me to your honourable wife:
Tell her the process of Antonio's end,
Say, how I loved you, speak me fair in death;
And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge,
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.
Repent not you that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not, that he pays your debt.
For, if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I 'll pay it instantly with all my heart.

Bass. Antonio, I am married to a wife,
Which is as dear to me as life itself;
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
Are not with me esteem'd above thy life:
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil to deliver you.

Por. Your wife would give you little thanks for that
If she were by, to hear you make the offer.

Gra. I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love.
I would she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

Ner. 'T is well you offer it behind her back;
The wish would make else an unquiet house.

Shy. These be the Christian husbands: I have a daughter;

Would, any of the stock of Barrabas
Had been her husband, rather than a Christian!
(*Aside.*)
We trifle time; I pray thee, pursue sentence.

Por. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine;
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.

Shy. Most rightful judge!

Por. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast;
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

Shy. Most learned judge! — A sentence; come, prepare.

Por. Tarry a little: — there is something else. —
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
The words expressly are, a pound of flesh:
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.

Gra. O upright judge! — Mark, Jew, — O learned judge!

Shy. Is that the law?

Por. Thyself shall see the act:
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured,
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

Gra. O learned judge! — Mark, Jew; — a learned judge!

Shy. I take this offer then, — pay the bond thrice,
And let the Christian go.

Bass. Here is the money.

Por. Soft;
The Jew shall have all justice; — soft; — no haste; —
He shall have nothing but the penalty.
Gra. O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!
Por. Therefore, prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood; nor cut thou less, nor more,
But just a pound of flesh; if thou tak'st more,
Or less, than just a pound, — be it but so much
As makes it light, or heavy, in the substance,
Or the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple; nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair, —
Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.
Gra. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!
Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip.
Por. Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.
Shy. Give me my principal, and let me go.
Bass. I have it ready for thee; here it is.
Por. He hath refused it in the open court;
He shall have merely justice, and his bond.
Gra. A Daniel, still say I; a second Daniel! —
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.
Shy. Shall I not have barely my principal?
Por. Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.
Shy. Why then the devil give him good of it!
I 'll stay no longer question.
Por. Tarry, Jew;
The law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted in the laws of Venice, —

If it be proved against an alien,
That by direct or indirect attempts,
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive,
Shall seize one half his goods: the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st:
For it appears by manifest proceeding,
That, indirectly, and directly too,
Thou hast contrived against the very life
Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd
The danger formerly by me rehearsed.
Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the duke.

Gra. Beg, that thou may'st have leave to hang thyself:
And yet thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
Thou hast not left the value of a cord;
Therefore, thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.

Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit,
I pardon thee thy life, before thou ask it;
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;
The other half comes to the general state,
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.

Por. Ay, for the state; not for Antonio.

Shy. Nay, take my life and all, pardon not that:
You take my house, when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life,
When you do take the means whereby I live.

Por. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

Gra. A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's sake.

Ant. So please my lord the duke, and all the court,
To quit the fine for one half of his goods;
I am content, so he will let me have
The other half in use, — to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter:
Two things provided more, — that, for this favour,
He presently become a Christian;
The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd,
Unto his son Lorenzo, and his daughter.

Duke. He shall do this; or else I do recant
The pardon that I late pronounced here.

Por. Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?

Shy. I am content.

Por. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

Shy. I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;
I am not well; send the deed after me,
And I will sign it.

Duke. Get thee gone, but do it.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

From

ACT I., SCENE I.

Cassius — Brutus.

Cas. Will you go see the order of the course?
Bru. Not I.
Cas. I pray you, do.
Bru. I am not gamesome: I do lack some part
Of that quick spirit that is in Antony.
Let me not hinder, Cassius, your desires;
I 'll leave you.
Cas. Brutus, I do observe you now of late:
I have not from your eyes that gentleness,
And show of love, as I was wont to have:
You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand
Over your friend that loves you.
Bru. Cassius,
Be not deceived: If I have veil'd my look,
I turn the trouble of my countenance
Merely upon myself. Vexed I am
Of late, with passions of some difference,
Conceptions only proper to myself,
Which give some soil, perhaps, to my behaviours:
But let not therefore my good friends be griev'd;
(Among which number, Cassius, be you one;)
Nor construe any further my neglect,

Than that poor Brutus, with himself at war,
Forgets the shows of love to other men.

Cas. Then, Brutus, I have much mistook your passion;
By means whereof, this breast of mine hath buried
Thoughts of great value, worthy cogitations.
Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face?

Bru. No, Cassius: for the eye sees not itself,
But by reflection, by some other things.

Cas. 'T is just;
And it is very much lamented, Brutus,
That you have no such mirrors as will turn
Your hidden worthiness into your eye,
That you might see your shadow. I have heard,
Where many of the best respect in Rome,
(Except immortal Cæsar,) speaking of Brutus,
And groaning underneath this age's yoke,
Have wished that noble Brutus had his eyes.

Bru. Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius,
That you would have me seek into myself,
For that which is not in me?

Cas. Therefore, good Brutus, be prepared to hear:
And, since you know you cannot see yourself
So well as by reflection, I, your glass,
Will modestly discover to yourself
That of yourself which you yet know not of.
And be not jealous on me, gentle Brutus:
Were I a common laugher, or did use
To stale with ordinary oaths my love
To every new protester; if you know,

That I do fawn on men, and hug them hard,
And after scandal them, or if you know
That I profess myself in banqueting
To all the rout, then hold me dangerous.

(*Flourish and shout.*)

Bru. What means this shouting? I do fear, the people
Choose Cæsar for their king.

Cas. Ay, do you fear it?
Then must I think you would not have it so.

Bru. I would not, Cassius; yet I love him well:—
But wherefore do you hold me here so long?
What is it that you would impart to me?
If it be aught toward the general good,
Set honour in one eye, and death i' the other,
And I will look on both indifferently:
For, let the gods so speed me, as I love
The name of honour more than I fear death.

Cas. I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus,
As well as I do know your outward favour.
Well, honour is the subject of my story.—
I cannot tell, what you and other men
Think of this life; but, for my single self,
I had as lief not be, as live to be
In awe of such a thing as I myself.
I was born free as Cæsar; so were you:
We both have fed as well; and we can both
Endure the winter's cold, as well as he.
For once, upon a raw and gusty day,
The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,
Cæsar said to me, "Dar'st thou, Cassius, now

Leap in with me into this angry flood,
And swim to yonder point?"—Upon the word,
Accoutred as I was, I plunged in,
And bade him follow; so, indeed, he did.
The torrent roar'd; and we did buffet it
With lusty sinews; throwing it aside
And stemming it with hearts of controversy.
But ere we could arrive the point proposed,
Cæsar cried, *Help me, Cassius, or I sink.*
I, as Æneas, our great ancestor,
Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder
The old Anchises bear, so, from the waves of Tiber
Did I the tired Cæsar: And this man
Is now become a god; and Cassius is
A wretched creature, and must bend his body,
If Cæsar carelessly but nod on him.
He had a fever when he was in Spain,
And, when the fit was on him, I did mark
How he did shake: 't is true, this god did shake:
His coward lips did from their colour fly;
And that same eye, whose bend doth awe the world,
Did lose his lustre: I did hear him groan:
Ay, and that tongue of his, that bade the Romans
Mark him, and write his speeches in their books,
Alas! it cried, *Give me some drink, Titinius,*
As a sick girl. Ye gods, it doth amaze me,
A man of such a feeble temper should
So get the start of the majestic world,
And bear the palm alone. (*Shout. Flourish.*)

Bru. Another general shout!

I do believe that these applauses are
For some new honours that are heap'd on Cæsar.

Cas. Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world,
Like a Colossus; and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs, and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.
Men at some time are masters of their fates:
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.
Brutus, and Cæsar: What should be in that Cæsar?
Why should that name be sounded more than yours?
Write them together, yours is as fair a name;
Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;
Weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure with them,
Brutus will start a spirit as soon as Cæsar. (*Shout.*)
Now in the names of all the gods at once,
Upon what meat doth this our Cæsar feed,
That he is grown so great? Age, thou art shamed!
Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods!
When went there by an age, since the great flood,
But it was famed with more than with one man?
When could they say, till now, that talk'd of Rome,
That her wide walks encompass'd but one man?
Now is it Rome indeed, and room enough,
When there is in it but one only man.
O! you and I have heard our fathers say,
There was a Brutus once that would have brook'd
The eternal devil to keep his state in Rome,
As easily as a king.

Bru. That you do love me, I am nothing jealous;

What you would work me to, I have some aim:
How I have thought of this, and of these times,
I shall recount hereafter; for this present,
I would not, so with love I might entreat you,
Be any farther moved. What you have said,
I will consider; what you have to say,
I will with patience hear: and find a time
Both meet to hear, and answer, such high things.
Till then, my noble friend, chew upon this;
Brutus had rather be a villager,
Than to repute himself a son of Rome
Under these hard conditions as this time
Is like to lay upon us.

Cas. I am glad that my weak words
Have struck but thus much shew of fire from Brutus.

KING HENRY IV., PART II.

From

ACT III., SCENE I.

King Henry IV. — Page.

K. Hen. Go, call the earls of Surrey and of Warwick;
But ere they come, bid them o'er-read these letters,
And well consider of them: Make good speed.

[*Exit Page.*

How many thousand of my poorest subjects
Are at this hour asleep! — O sleep, O gentle sleep,
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frighted thee,

That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down,
And steep my senses in forgetfulness?
Why rather, sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs,
Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,
And hush'd with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber,
Than in the perfum'd chambers of the great,
Under the canopies of costly state,
And lull'd with sounds of sweetest melody?
O thou dull god, why liest thou with the vile
In loathsome beds; and leav'st the kingly couch,
A watch-case, or a common 'larum bell?
Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge,
And in the visitation of the winds,
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,
Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them
With deaf'ning clamours in the slippery clouds,
That, with the hurly, death itself awakes?
Canst thou, O partial sleep! give thy repose
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude;
And, in the calmest and most stillest night,
With all appliances and means to boot,
Deny it to a king? Then, happy low, lie down;
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

From

ACT IV., SCENE IV.

Prince Henry.

Why doth the crown lie there upon his pillow,
Being so troublesome a bedfellow?
O polish'd perturbation! golden care!
That keep'st the ports of slumber open wide
To many a watchful night! — sleep with it now!
Yet not so sound, and half so deeply sweet,
As he, whose brow, with homely biggin bound,
Snores out the watch of night. O majesty!
When thou dost pinch thy bearer, thou dost sit
Like a rich armour, worn in heat of day,
That scalds with safety. By his gates of breath
There lies a downy feather, which stirs not:
Did he suspire, that light and weightless down
Perforce must move. — My gracious lord! my father!
This sleep is sound indeed; this is a sleep,
That from this golden rigol hath divorced
So many English kings. Thy due, from me,
Is tears, and heavy sorrows of the blood;
Which nature, love, and filial tenderness,
Shall, O dear father, pay thee plenteously:
My due, from thee, is this imperial crown;
Which, as immediate from thy place and blood,
Derives itself to me. Lo, here it sits, —

(*Putting it on his head.*)

Which Heaven shall guard: And put the world's whole
strength
Into one giant arm, it shall not force
This lineal honour from me: This from thee
Will I to mine leave, as 't is left to me.

HENRY V.

From

ACT III., SCENE I.

King Henry, Exeter, Bedford, Gloster, and Soldiers, with scaling ladders.

K. Hen. Once more unto the breach, dear friends,
once more;
Or close the wall up with our English dead!
In peace, there 's nothing so becomes a man,
As modest stillness and humility:
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger;
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage,
Then lend the eye a terrible aspect;
Let it pry through the portage of the head,
Like the brass cannon; let the brow o'erwhelm it,
As fearfully as doth a galled rock
O'erhang and jutty his confounded base
Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean.
Now set the teeth, and stretch the nostril wide;

Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit
To his full height! — On, on you nobless English,
Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof!
Fathers, that, like so many Alexanders,
Have, in these parts, from morn till even fought,
And sheathed their swords for lack of argument.
Dishonour not your mothers: now attest,
That those, whom you called fathers did beget you!
Be copy now to men of grosser blood,
And teach them how to war! — and you good yeomen,
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
The mettle of your pasture; let us swear
That you are worth your breeding, which I doubt not;
For there is none of you so mean and base,
That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.
I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot;
Follow your spirit: and, upon this charge,
Cry — God for Harry! England! and Saint George!

RICHARD III.

From

ACT I., SCENE I.

Gloster.

Glo. Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;
And all the clouds, that lower'd upon our house,

In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;
Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.
Grim-visaged war hath smoothed his wrinkled front;
And now, — instead of mounting barbed steeds,
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries, —
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber,
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
But I, — that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty,
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable,
That dogs bark at me, as I halt by them; –
Why I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to see my shadow in the sun,
And descant on mine own deformity;
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain,
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
By drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams,

To set my brother Clarence, and the king,
In deadly hate, the one against the other:
And, if King Edward be as true and just,
As I am subtle, false, and treacherous,
This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up;
About a prophecy, which says that G
Of Edward's heirs the murtherer shall be.
Dive, thoughts, down to my soul! here Clarence comes.

KING HENRY VIII.

From

ACT III., SCENE II.

Wolsey — Cromwell.

Wol. So farewell to the little good you bear me.
Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness!
This is the state of man: to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hopes; to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him:
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost;
And, — when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a ripening, — nips his root,
And then he falls, as I do. I have ventured,
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
This many summers in a sea of glory;
But far beyond my depth: my high-blown pride
At length broke under me; and now has left me,
Weary, and old with service, to the mercy

Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.
Vain pomp, and glory of this world, I hate ye;
I feel my heart new open'd: O, how wretched
Is that poor man, that hangs on princes' favours!
There is, betwixt that smile we would aspire to,
That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin,
More pangs and fears than wars or women have;
And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
Never to hope again. —

Enter CROMWELL, *amazedly.*

Why, how now, Cromwell?

Crom. I have no power to speak, sir.

Wol. What, amaz'd
At my misfortunes? can thy spirit wonder,
A great man should decline? Nay, an you weep,
I am fallen indeed.

Crom. How does your grace?

Wol. Why, well;
Never so truly happy, my good Cromwell.
I know myself now; and I feel within me
A peace above all earthly dignities,
A still and quiet conscience. The king has cur'd me,
I humbly thank his grace; and from these shoulders,
These ruin'd pillars, out of pity, taken
A load would sink a navy, too much honour:
O, 't is a burthen, Cromwell, 't is a burthen,
Too heavy for a man that hopes for heaven.

Crom. I am glad, your grace has made that right use of it.

Wol. I hope I have: I am able now, methinks,
(Out of a fortitude of soul I feel,)
To endure more miseries, and greater far,
Than my weak-hearted enemies dare offer.
What news abroad?

Crom. The heaviest, and the worst,
Is your displeasure with the king.

Wol. God bless him!

Crom. The next is, that Sir Thomas More is chosen
Lord Chancellor in your place.

Wol. That 's somewhat sudden:
But he 's a learned man. May he continue
Long in his highness' favour, and do justice
For truth's sake, and his conscience; that his bones,
When he has run his course, and sleeps in blessings,
May have a tomb of orphans' tears wept on 'em!
What more?

Crom. That Cranmer is return'd with welcome,
Install'd lord archbishop of Canterbury.

Wol. That 's news indeed.

Crom. Last, that the lady Anne,
Whom the king hath in secrecy long married,
This day was view'd in open, as his queen,
Going to chapel; and the voice is now
Only about her coronation.

Wol. There was the weight that pull'd me down.
O Cromwell,
The king has gone beyond me, — all my glories
In that one woman I have lost for ever.
No sun shall ever usher forth mine honours,

Or gild again the noble troops, that waited
Upon my smiles. Go, get thee from me, Cromwell;
I am a poor fallen man, unworthy now
To be thy lord and master: Seek the king;
That sun, I pray, may never set! I have told him
What, and how true thou art: he will advance thee;
Some little memory of me will stir him,
(I know his noble nature,) not to let
Thy hopeful service perish too: Good Cromwell,
Neglect him not; make use now, and provide
For thine own future safety.

Crom. O my lord,
Must I then leave you? must I needs forego
So good, so noble, and so true a master?
Bear witness, all that have not hearts of iron,
With what a sorrow Cromwell leaves his lord. —
The king shall have my service; but my prayers
For ever, and for ever, shall be yours.

Wol. Cromwell, I did not think to shed a tear
In all my miseries; but thou hast forc'd me,
Out of thy honest truth, to play the woman.
Let 's dry our eyes: and thus far hear me, Cromwell;
And, — when I am forgotten, as I shall be;
And sleep in dull cold marble, where no mention
Of me more must be heard of, — say, I taught thee,
Say, Wolsey, — that once trod the ways of glory,
And sounded all the depths and shoals of honour, —
Found thee a way, out of his wrack, to rise in;
A sure and safe one, though thy master miss'd it.
Mark but my fall, and that that ruin'd me.

Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition:
By that sin fell the angels; how can man then,
The image of his Maker, hope to win by it?
Love thyself last: cherish those hearts that hate thee;
Corruption wins not more than honesty.
Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,
To silence envious tongues. Be just, and fear not:
Let all the ends thou aim'st at, be thy country's,
Thy God's, and truth's; then if thou fall'st, O Cromwell,
Thou fall'st a blessed martyr. Serve the king;
And, — Prithee, lead me in:
There take an inventory of all I have,
To the last penny; 't is the king's: my robe,
And my integrity to Heaven, is all
I dare now call mine own. O Cromwell, Cromwell,
Had I but served my God with half the zeal
I serv'd my king, he would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies.

Crom. Good sir, have patience.

Wol. So I have. Farewell
The hopes of court! my hopes in heaven do dwell.

[*Exeunt.*

IV. JOHN MILTON.

1608–1674.

JOHN MILTON was a little boy eight years old when Shakespeare died, and was the direct heir to his title, "The happiest poet of his time, and best."

In the year 1608, when Shakespeare, in the midst of his brilliant career, was writing perhaps "Coriolanus" or "Pericles" or "Troilus and Cressida," Milton was born in a quiet little house in Bread Street, in London. He died in a quiet house in Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields, in the year 1674, to be known through after times as "John Milton, the poet, the statesman, the philosopher, the boast of English literature, the champion and the martyr of English liberty."

We think of Milton and study his life in three pictures: first, as a child so beautiful that his father employed the famous Dutch artist, Cornelius Janssen, to paint his portrait in "laced ruffles" when he was ten years old; and as a lad of sixteen at Christ's College, Cambridge, where his delicate beauty and refined tastes gained him the nickname "The Lady." We think of him as a diligent little student whose wise and generous father determined from the first that the bright, promising, thoughtful boy should have that best endowment, — an education; and we read how he said himself, "I had from my first years, by the ceaseless diligence and care of my father (whom God recompense), been exercised to the tongues and some science as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and teachers both at home and at the schools."

Playing on the organ; reading Latin and Greek, and afterward Italian and French and Hebrew; learning to fence and to use the sword, and to practice all sorts of manly exercise; studying until midnight for the love of it when he was only twelve years old; teaching his fellow-students at the university that "The Lady of Christ's College" was a very brilliant and profound scholar; writing Latin and Italian verses which other scholars applauded and admired, — Milton came to be twenty-two years old. Then, on one Christmas morning, he wrote a splendid ode "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," and proved himself a poet. If any boy wishes to know what a college boy can do, let him read and learn some of the fine stanzas of this ode, and then the "Lines on Shakespeare," the first lines of Milton that were ever published; or the song, "On a May Morning," and "At a Solemn Music," — all written by "The Lady" while he was studying for his degree at Christ's College. Let him read, too, "Lycidas," Milton's English poem on the death of his college friend, Edward King, who was drowned, and then (if he can) his Latin poem, "The Epitaph of Damon," on the death of Diodati, the dear friend of his childhood, with "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," and the beautiful pastoral drama, "The Masque of Comus," and he will know the early work of Milton, and complete the beautiful picture of his childhood and youth.

The second picture, the manhood of Milton, is quite a different scene. It has a somber background, and to understand it we must recall the time to which it belongs, the dark and anxious days of the great struggle for liberty in the seventeenth century. The England of Chaucer, fighting in the French wars, was a united country; the England of Spenser and Shakespeare, fighting and colonizing and conquering abroad, was at home an England of intense loyalty to the

Sovereign Queen Elizabeth; but Milton's England, the England of the Stuarts, had "fallen on evil days." Charles the First was upholding "the divine right of kings," and his gay court and cavaliers were laughing at the solemn faces, the sober manners, and the strait-laced ideas of the Puritans, the party of the great people of England, who claimed the rights of civil liberty and religious liberty, and who put these rights to the test with fire and sword. Milton loved poetry and music and art and beauty, but he loved liberty better. He was traveling in Italy when he heard that there was war at home, and home he hastened, for he said, "I thought it base to be traveling for pleasure abroad when my fellow-citizens were fighting for liberty at home." "Give me," he said, too, "the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely, above all liberties"; and, again, "I have determined to lay up, as the best treasure and solace of good old age, if God vouchsafe it to me, the honest liberty of free speech."

So Milton laid aside the poet's pen and took up the patriot's pen, and made it do the duty of a sword. He became Cromwell's Latin secretary, and wrote state papers which made the Commonwealth respected as much for scholarship as for statesmanship. He wrote the "Areopagitica" on the "Liberty of the Press"; the "Defensio Populi Anglicani," an answer to Salmasius, a French scholar living in Holland, who attacked the English people savagely for beheading their King. He wrote the "Iconoclastes," or the Image Breaker, the tract on Education, and a score of other Latin and English tracts and pamphlets.

Milton was a partisan, and sometimes a hot and angry one. He fought with all his might, and he was not always particular in the choice of his weapons, so that there is some of his prose writing which we do not value; but we

must not forget that there are parts of it that are as noble as anything in English speech.

While Milton was writing and fighting for liberty, he was married to a seventeen-year-old girl, Mary Powell, the daughter of a Royalist. After a month in her husband's house she found that he did not believe in liberty of speech quite so much at home as he did abroad, and the duty of subjection to her husband, and his simple way of living with the boy pupils whom he had for many years, were so distasteful to her that at last she fairly ran away to her father and stayed with him for two years, but came back with her parents to be forgiven and protected when the Puritans were in power. We shall have to admit that Milton does not seem to have been lovable. Of our poet friends, we should probably have enjoyed Chaucer, admired Spenser, loved Shakespeare, and respected Milton; but his wife did not *love* him, and though he married a second and a third time, he never seems to have had a very happy or peaceful home, and his three daughters complained bitterly of his treatment, which perhaps was a little severe. Yet we cannot help wishing that, with Shakespeare's King Lear, among his three daughters he might have had one like the gentle Cordelia, who could have taken fond pride in his greatness, and overlooked his infirmities of temper. When he was forty-four years old a great shadow fell upon him. He became entirely blind, and in this blindness, though still busily at work for the Commonwealth and the people, and writing occasional sonnets "To Cromwell," or "To Fairfax," or "On his Blindness," we leave him in the second picture for the third and greatest one, the picture of Milton in his old age.

"To leave something so written to after times as they should not willingly let die," — this was the noble purpose of Milton's youth. Put aside for twenty years, this purpose

never weakened, and when he was old and blind and poor, and threatened with persecution by the Royalist party, again in power under Charles the Second, we find him once more as Milton the poet, the writer of the great epic of our language, the "Paradise Lost." The Puritan party lived and breathed in the spirit of religious reform; so Milton, sitting down with his daughters about him, put aside the legends of Arthur, of which he had thought in his youth, and dictated to them, out of the heart of the Puritan religion, the great story of the Fall of Man.

It is the most lofty and majestic and sublime poem in our language, and after growing familiar with it we say, with Walter Savage Landor, "After reading the 'Paradise Lost,' if I take up another poet, I seem to have left the music of Handel for the music of the street."

After seven years given up to this greatest of his poems, Milton still wrote on, — the second and shorter epic, "Paradise Regained," and the dramatic poem, "Samson," — and then, with his great work finally and well done, he died, —

"The old, blind poet,"

"The mighty orb of song,"

"Our great master of the great style,"

"The mighty mouthed inventor of harmonies,"

who "gave us manners, virtue, freedom, power," and whose "soul was like a star and dwelt apart."

PARADISE LOST.

From

BOOK I.

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of chaos: or, if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flow'd
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread,

Dove-like, sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,
And made it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine; what is low raise and support;
That to the height of this great argument
I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.
Say first, for Heaven hides nothing from thy view
Nor the deep tract of Hell; say first, what cause
Moved our grand parents, in that happy state,
Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the world besides?
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?
Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile,
Stirr'd up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host
Of rebel angels, by whose aid, aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equalled the Most High,
If he opposed; and, with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God
Raised impious war in Heaven, and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.
Nine times the space that measures day and night

To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew,
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded, though immortal: but his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him: round he throws his baleful eyes,
That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate:
At once, as far as angel's ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild;
A dungeon horrible on all sides round
As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
That comes to all; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed:
Such place eternal Justice had prepared
For those rebellious; here their prison ordained
In utter darkness, and their portion set
As far removed from God and light of Heaven,
As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.
Oh, how unlike the place from whence they fell!
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
He soon discerns, and weltering by his side
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and named

Beëlzebub. To whom the Arch-Enemy,
And thence in Heaven called Satan, with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence thus began:—
"If thou beest he; but oh, how fallen! how changed
From him, who in the happy realms of light,
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
Myriads though bright! If he whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
In equal ruin: into what pit thou seest
From what height fallen, so much the stronger proved
He with his thunder: and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? yet not for those,
Nor what the potent victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent or change,
Though changed in outward lustre, that fix'd mind,
And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
That with the mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of spirits armed,
That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield,
And what is else not to be overcome;
That glory never shall his wrath or might

Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power,
Who from the terror of this arm so late
Doubted his empire; that were low indeed,
That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall; since by fate the strength of gods
And this empyreal substance, cannot fail;
Since, through experience of this great event,
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcilable to our grand foe,
Who now triumphs, and in the excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven."

From

BOOK II.

High on a throne of a royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East, with richest hand,
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,
Satan exalted sat, by merit raised
To that bad eminence: and from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
Vain war with Heaven, and, by success untaught
His proud imaginations thus display'd:
"Powers and dominions, deities of Heaven!
For since no deep within her gulf can hold

Immortal vigour, though oppressed and fallen,
I give not Heaven for lost: From this descent
Celestial virtues rising, will appear
More glorious and more dread than from no fall,
And trust themselves to fear no second fate.
Me, though just right, and the fix'd laws of Heaven,
Did first create your leader; next, free choice,
With what besides, in counsel or in fight,
Hath been achieved of merit, yet this loss,
Thus far at least recover'd, hath much more
Establish'd in a safe unenvied throne
Yielded with full consent. The happier state
In Heaven, which follows dignity, might draw
Envy from each inferior; but who here
Will envy whom the highest place exposes
Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim
Your bulwark; and condemns to greatest share
Of endless pain? Where there is then no good
For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
From faction; for none sure will claim in Hell
Precedence; none, whose portion is so small
Of present pain, that with ambitious mind
Will covet more. With this advantage then
To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,
More than can be in Heaven, we now return
To claim our just inheritance of old,
Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assured us; and, by what best way,
Whether of open war, or covert guile,
We now debate: who can advise, may speak."

From

BOOK V.

"THESE are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then,
Unspeakable! who sitt'st above these heavens,
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works; yet these declare
The goodness beyond thought, and power divine.
Speak, ye who best can tell, ye sons of light,
Angels; for ye behold him and with songs
And choral symphonies, day without night,
Circle his throne rejoicing; ye in Heaven,
On earth join all ye creatures to extol
Him first, him last, him midst and without end.
Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,
If better thou belong not to the dawn,
Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
With thy bright circlet, praise him in thy sphere,
While day arises, that sweet hour of prime.
Thou sun, of this great world both eye and soul,
Acknowledge him thy greater, sound his praise
In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st,
And when high noon hast gained, and when thou fall'st.
Moon, that now meet'st the orient sun, now fly'st,
With the fixed stars, fixed in their orb that flies;
And ye five other wandering fires, that move
In mystic dance not without song, resound
His praise, who out of darkness called up light.

Air, and ye elements, the eldest birth
Of nature's womb, that in quaternion run
Perpetual circle, multiform; and mix
And nourish all things; let your ceaseless change
Vary to our great Maker still new praise.
Ye mists and exhalations, that now rise
From hill or steaming lake, dusky or gray,
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
In honour to the world's great Author rise;
Whether to deck with clouds the uncoloured sky,
Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,
Rising or falling still advance his praise.
His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye pines,
With every plant, in sign of worship wave.
Fountains, and ye that warble as ye flow,
Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.
Join voices, all ye living souls; ye birds,
That singing up to Heaven-gate ascend,
Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise.
Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk
The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep;
Witness if I be silent, morn or even,
To hill or valley, fountain or fresh shade,
Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.
Hail, universal Lord! be bounteous still
To give us only good; and if the night
Have gathered aught of evil or concealed,
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark."

From

BOOK XI.

"Oh, unexpected stroke, worse than of death!
Must I thus leave thee, Paradise? thus leave
Thee, native soil, these happy walks and shades,
Fit haunt of gods? where I had hope to spend,
Quiet, though sad, the respite of that day
That must be mortal to us both? O flowers,
That never will in other climate grow,
My early visitation, and my last
At even, which I bred up with tender hand
From the first opening bud, and gave ye names;
Who now shall rear ye to the sun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount?
Thee lastly, nuptial bower, by me adorned,
With what to sight or smell was sweet; from thee
How shall I part, and whither wander down
Into a lower world, to this obscure
And wild? how shall we breathe in other air
Less pure, accustomed to immortal fruits?"

From

BOOK XII.

Descended, Adam to the bower where Eve
Lay sleeping, ran before, but found her waked;
And thus with words not sad she him received:
"Whence thou return'st, and whither went'st, I know;
For God is also in sleep; and dreams advise,

Which he hath sent propitious, some great good
Presaging, since, with sorrow and heart's distress,
Wearied I fell asleep: but now lead on;
In me is no delay; with thee to go,
Is to stay here; without thee here to stay,
Is to go hence unwilling; thou to me
Art all things under Heaven, all places thou,
Who for my wilful crime art banished hence.
This further consolation, yet secure,
I carry hence; though all by me is lost,
Such favour I, unworthy, am vouchsafed,
By me the promised Seed shall all restore!"
So spake our mother Eve; and Adam heard,
Well pleased, but answered not; for now, too nigh
The archangel stood; and from the other hill
To their fixed station, all in bright array,
The cherubim descended; on the ground,
Gliding metéorous, as evening mist,
Risen from a river, o'er the marish glides,
And gathers ground fast at the labourer's heel,
Homeward returning. High in front advanced,
The brandished sword of God before them blazed,
Fierce as a comet, which with torrid heat,
And vapour as the Lybian air adust,
Began to parch that temperate clime; whereat,
In either hand the hastening angel caught
Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate
Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
To the subjected plain; then disappeared.
They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld

Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate,
With dreadful faces thronged, and fiery arms:
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide:
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY.

I.

This is the month, and this the happy morn,
Wherein the Son of Heaven's eternal King,
Of wedded maid, and virgin mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring;
For so the holy sages once did sing,
That he our deadly forfeit should release,
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.

II.

That glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty
Wherewith he wont at Heaven's high council-table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside; and here with us to be,
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.

III.

Say, heavenly muse, shall not thy sacred vein
Afford a present to the Infant-God?
Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemn strain,
To welcome him to this his new abode,
Now while the Heaven, by the sun's team untrod,
Hath took no print of the approaching light,
And all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons bright?

IV.

See how from far upon the eastern road
The star-led wizards haste with odours sweet:
Oh, run, prevent them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at his blessed feet;
Have thou the honour first thy Lord to greet,
And join thy voice unto the angel quire,
From out his secret altar touched with hallowed fire.

The Hymn.

I.

It was the winter wild,
While the Heaven-born child
All meanly wrapped in the rude manger lies:
Nature, in awe to him,
Had doffed her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the sun, her lusty paramour.

II.

Only with speeches fair
She wooes the gentle air
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow,
And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinful blame,
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw,
Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

III.

But he, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace;
She, crowned with olive green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere
His ready harbinger,
With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing,
And waving wide her myrtle wand,
She strikes an universal peace through sea and land.

IV.

No war, or battle's sound,
Was heard the world around:
The idle spear and shield were high up hung:
The hookéd chariot stood,
Unstained with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the arméd throng,
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

V.

But peaceful was the night
Wherein the Prince of Light
His reign of peace upon the earth began:
The winds with wonder whist
Smoothly the waters kissed,
Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charméd wave.

VI.

The stars with deep amaze
Stand fixed in stedfast gaze,
Bending one way their precious influence,
And will not take their flight,
For all the morning light,
Or Lucifer that often warned them thence;
But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
Until their Lord himself bespake, and bid them go.

VII.

And though the shady gloom
Had given day her room,
The sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame,
As his inferior flame
The new enlightened world no more should need;
He saw a greater sun appear
Than his bright throne, or burning axletree, could bear.

VIII.

The shepherds on the lawn,
Or e'er the point of dawn,
  Sat simply chatting in a rustic row;
Full little thought they then,
That the mighty Pan
  Was kindly come to live with them below;
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

IX.

When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet,
  As never was by mortal finger strook;
Divinely-warbled voice
Answering the stringéd noise,
  As all their souls in blissful rapture took:
The air, such pleasure loth to lose,
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly close.

X.

Nature that heard such sound,
Beneath the hollow round
  Of Cynthia's seat, the airy region thrilling,
Now was almost won
To think her part was done,
  And that her reign had here its last fulfilling;
She knew such harmony alone
Could hold all heaven and earth in happier union.

XI.

At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light,
That with long beams the shame-faced night arrayed;
The helméd cherubim,
And sworded seraphim,
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displayed,
Harping in loud and solemn quire,
With unexpressive notes to Heaven's new-born Heir.

XII.

Such music (as 't is said)
Before was never made,
But when of old the sons of morning sung,
While the Creator great
His constellations set,
And the well-balanced world on hinges hung,
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep.

XIII.

Ring out, ye crystal spheres,
Once bless our human ears
(If ye have power to touch our senses so),
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time,
And let the bass of Heaven's deep organ blow,
And with your ninefold harmony
Make up full concert to the angelic symphony.

XIV.

For if such holy song
Enwrap our fancy long,
  Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold,
And speckled Vanity
Will sicken soon and die,
  And leprous Sin will melt from earthly mould,
And Hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

XV.

Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,
  Orbed in a rainbow; and like glories wearing
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen,
  With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering,
And Heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.

XVI.

But wisest Fate says no,
This must not yet be so;
  The babe lies yet in smiling infancy,
That on the bitter cross
Must redeem our loss;
  So both himself and us to glorify:
Yet first to those ychained in sleep,
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the
    deep,

XVII.

With such a horrid clang
As on Mount Sinai rang,
  While the red fire and smouldering clouds out brake:
The aged earth aghast,
With terror of that blast,
  Shall from the surface to the centre shake;
When at the world's last session,
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his throne.

XVIII.

And then at last our bliss
Full and perfect is,
  But now begins; for, from this happy day,
The old Dragon, underground
In straiter limits bound,
  Not half so far casts his usurpéd sway,
And wroth to see his kingdom fail,
Swinges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

XIX.

The oracles are dumb,
No voice or hideous hum
  Runs through the archéd roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
  With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathéd spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

XX.

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament;
From haunted spring, and dale
Edged with poplar pale,
The parting genius is with sighing sent;
With flower-inwoven tresses torn
The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

XXI.

In consecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth,
The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint;
In urns, and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the Flamens at their service quaint;
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar power foregoes his wonted seat.

XXII.

Peor and Baälim
Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice battered god of Palestine;
And moonéd Ashtaroth,
Heaven's queen and mother both,
Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine;
The Lybic Hammon shrinks his horn,
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz mourn.

XXIII.

And sullen Moloch, fled,
Hath left in shadows dread
  His burning idol all of blackest hue;
In vain with cymbals' ring
They call the grisly king,
  In dismal dance about the furnace blue;
The brutish gods of Nile as fast,
Isis, and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste.

XXIV.

Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green,
  Trampling the unshowered grass with lowings loud:
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest;
  Nought but profoundest hell can be his shroud;
In vain with timbrelled anthems dark
The sable-stoléd sorcerers bear his worshipped ark.

XXV.

He feels from Juda's land
The dreaded Infant's hand,
  The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn;
Nor all the gods beside
Longer dare abide,
  Not Typhon huge ending in snaky twine:
Our Babe, to show his Gòdhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damnéd crew.

XXVI.

So when the sun in bed,
Curtained with cloudy red,
  Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to the infernal jail,
  Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave,
And the yellow-skirted fays
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved maze.

XXVII.

But see, the Virgin blest
Hath laid her Babe to rest,
  Time is our tedious song should here have ending:
Heaven's youngest teemèd star
Hath fixed her polished car,
  Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending:
And all about the courtly stable
Bright-harnessed angels sit in order serviceable.

From

THE MASQUE OF COMUS.

Song of the Lady wandering in the Enchanted Wood, where she has lost her two Brothers.

SONG.

SWEET Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen
  Within thy airy shell,

By slow Meander's margent green,
And in the violet-embroidered vale,
Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well;
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
That likest thy Narcissus are?
Oh! if thou have
Hid them in some flowery cave,
Tell me but where,
Sweet queen of parley, daughter of the sphere,
So mayst thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies.

The Elder Brother seeking his Sister in the Enchanted Wood.

Peace, brother! be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils;
For, grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion!
I do not think my sister so to seek,
Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon

Were in the flat sea sunk. And wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retiréd solitude,
Where, with her best nurse, contemplation,
She plumes her feathers and lets grow her wings,
That, in the various bustle of resort,
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impaired.
He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day;
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the midday sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.

The two Brothers and the Attendant Spirit find the Lady, spell-bound.

Spirit.

What, have you let the false enchanter 'scape?
Oh! ye mistook, ye should have snatched his wand,
And bound him fast; without his rod reversed,
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the lady that sits here
In stony fetters fixed, and motionless;
Yet stay, be not disturbed; now I methink me,
Some other means I have which may be used,
Which once of Melibœus old I learnt,
The soothest shepherd that e'er piped on plains.
There is a gentle nymph not far from hence,
That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream,
Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure;
Whilome she was the daughter of Locrine,
That had the sceptre from his father Brute.

She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
Of her enraged stepdame, Guendolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood,
That stay'd her flight with his cross-flowing course.
The water nymphs that in the bottom played,
Held up their pearléd wrists and took her in,
Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall,
Who, piteous of our woes, reared her lank head,
And gave her to his daughters to embathe
In nectared lavers strewed with asphodel,
And through the porch and inlet of each sense
Dropped in ambrosial oils till she revived,
And underwent a quick immortal change,
Made goddess of the river: still she retains
Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
Helping all urchin blasts, and ill-luck signs
That the shrewd meddling elf delights to make,
Which she with precious vialled liquors heals;
For which the shepherds at their festivals
Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.
And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
The clasping charm, and thaw the numbing spell,
If she be right invoked in warbled song;
For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
In hard-besetting need: this will I try,
And add the power of some adjuring verse.

Song.

Sabrina fair,
  Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
  In twisted braids of lilies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;
  Listen for dear honour's sake,
  Goddess of the silver lake,
    Listen and save.
Listen, and appear to us,
In name of great Oceanus;
By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
And Tethys' grave majestic pace,
By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
And the Carpathian wizard's hook,
By scaly Triton's winding shell,
And old soothsaying Glaucus' spell,
By Leucothea's lovely hands,
And her son that rules the strands,
By Thetis' tinsel-slippered feet,
And the songs of sirens sweet,
By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
And fair Ligea's golden comb,
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks,
Sleeking her soft alluring locks;
By all the nymphs that nightly dance
Upon thy streams with wily glance,
Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head
From thy coral-paven bed,

And bridle in thy headlong wave,
Till thou our summons answered have.
Listen, and save.

Sabrina rises, attended by water-nymphs, and sings.

By the rushy-fringed bank,
Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays,
Thick set with agate, and the azure sheen
Of turkis blue, and emerald green,
That in the channel strays;
Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printless feet
O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread;
Gentle swain, at thy request
I am here.

Spirit.

Goddess dear,
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charméd band
Of true virgin here distressed,
Through the force, and through the wile,
Of unblest enchanter vile.

Sabrina.

Shepherd, 't is my office best
To help ensnaréd chastity:
Brightest lady, look on me;

Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
Drops, that from my fountain pure
I have kept, of precious cure;
Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip;
Next this marbled venomed seat,
Smeared with gums of glutinous heat,
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold:
Now the spell hath lost his hold;
And I must haste, ere morning hour,
To wait in Amphitrite's bower.

Sabrina descends, and the Lady rises out of her seat.

Spirit.

Virgin, daughter of Locrine,
Sprung of old Anchises' line,
May thy brimméd waves for this
Their full tribute never miss
From a thousand petty rills,
That tumble down the snowy hills:
Summer drouth, or singéd air,
Never scorch thy tresses fair,
Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill with mud:
May thy billows roll ashore
The beryl, and the golden ore;
May thy lofty head be crowned
With many a tower and terrace round,
And here and there thy banks upon
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.

Come, lady, while Heaven lends us grace,
Let us fly this curséd place,
Lest the sorcerer us entice
With some other new device.
Not a waste or needless sound
Till we come to holier ground;
I shall be your faithful guide
Through this gloomy covert wide;
And not many furlongs thence
Is your father's residence,
Where this night are met in state
Many a friend to gratulate
His wished presence; and, beside,
All the swains that near abide,
With jigs and rural dance resort:
We shall catch them at their sport;
And our sudden coming there
Will double all their mirth and cheer.
Come, let us haste, the stars grow high,
But night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

The scene changes, presenting Ludlow town and the President's castle; then come in country dancers; after them the Attendant Spirit, with the two Brothers and the Lady.

SONG.

Spirit.

Back, shepherds, back! enough your play,
Till next sunshine holiday:

Here be, without duck or nod,
Other trippings to be trod
Of lighter toes, and such court guise
As Mercury did first devise,
With the mincing Dryades,
On the lawns, and on the leas.

This second Song presents them to their Father and Mother.

Noble lord, and lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight;
Here behold, so goodly grown,
Three fair branches of your own;
Heaven hath timely tried their youth,
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
And sent them here through hard assays
With a crown of deathless praise,
To triumph in victorious dance
O'er sensual folly and intemperance.

The dances ended, the Spirit epiloguises.

Spirit.

To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky:
There I suck the liquid air
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three,
That sing about the golden tree:

Along the crispéd shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring,
The Graces, and the rosy-bosomed Hours,
Thither all their bounties bring:
There eternal Summer dwells,
And west winds, with musky wing,
About the cedarn alleys fling
Nard and cassia's balmy smells.
Iris there, with humid bow,
Waters the odorous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue
Than her purfled scarf can shew;
And drenches with Elysian dew
(List, mortals, if your ears be true)
Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where young Adonis oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound
In slumber soft, and on the ground
Sadly sits the Assyrian queen;
But far above, in spangled sheen,
Celestial Cupid, her famed son, advanced,
Holds his dear Psyche sweet entranced,
After her wandering labours long,
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride,
And from her fair unspotted side
Two blissful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.
But now my task is smoothly done;
I can fly, or I can run

Quickly to the green earth's end,
Where the bowed welkin slow doth bend,
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.
Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Virtue; she alone is free:
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or, if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

LYCIDAS.

YET once more, O ye laurels! and once more
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer:
Who would not sing for Lycidas? He knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.
Begin then, sisters, of the sacred well,
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;

Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain, and coy excuse,
So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favour my destined urn,
And, as he passes, turn
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud:
For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill.
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the gray fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose, at evening, bright,
Toward Heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,
Tempered to the oaten flute;
Rough satyrs danced, and fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long,
And old Damætas loved to hear our song.
But oh, the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone, and never must return!
Thee, shepherd, thee the woods, and desert caves
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen,
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,

Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white-thorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherds' ear.
Where were ye, nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep,
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie;
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream:
Ah me! I fondly dream,
Had ye been there, for what could that have done?
What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
The Muse herself for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament,
When by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
Alas! what boots it with incessant care
To tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble minds)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"

Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears;
" Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies,
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in Heaven expect thy meed."
O fountain Arethuse, and thou honoured flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,
That strain I heard was of a higher mood:
But now my oat proceeds,
And listens to the herald of the sea
That came in Neptune's plea;
He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
What hard mishap had doomed this gentle swain?
And questioned every gust, of rugged wings,
That blows from off each beaked promontory:
They knew not of his story;
And sage Hippotades their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed:
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge,
Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.

"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"
Last came, and last did go,
The pilot of the Galilean lake;
Two massy keys he bore, of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain),
He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake:
"How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as for their bellies' sake
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!
Of other care they little reckoning make,
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest;
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learned aught else the least
That to the faithful herdsman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But swollen with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread:
Besides what the grim wolf, with privy paw,
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."
Return, Alpheus, the dread voice is past,
That shrunk thy streams: return Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use

Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears:
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffodillies fill their cups with tears,
To strow the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
For so to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
Ah me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where e'er thy bones are hurled,
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou, perhaps, under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
Where the great vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold;
Look homeward, angel now, and melt with ruth:
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.
Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,

Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor;
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of him that walked the waves,
Where other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals gray;
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropped into the western bay;
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:
To morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

SONNETS.

XVI.

TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL.

Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,
And on the neck of crownéd fortune proud
Hast reared God's trophies, and his work pursued,
While Darwen stream with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureate wreath. Yet much remains
To conquer still; peace hath her victories
No less renowned than war: new foes arise
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains:
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw.

XIX.

ON HIS BLINDNESS.

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide;

And that one talent which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he, returning, chide;
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best: his state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

V. JOHN DRYDEN.

1631–1700.

THERE is no more interesting spot in England, of an early June morning, than the old square of the Covent Garden Market, where flowers, dewy and fragrant, and fresh, delicious fruits are piled up in splendid profusion, and fill the air about with perfume. We are told by Hare, in one of his delightful "Walks in London," that once on a time, many long years — six hundred years — ago (a hundred years before Chaucer was born), the fruits and the flowers grew here in the Covent Garden, which was then the *Convent* Garden of Westminster Abbey. But the great city grew up and over the old garden, and "the place formal and quiet, where a salad was cut for a Lady Abbess and flowers were gathered to adorn images," came in time to have all the stir and tumult and riot of life and color which belong to the great market-places of the world. If we could have paid it a visit two hundred years ago, on one of the June mornings of the late seventeenth century, we should have found the marketing going on, and the fruits and flowers piled up even then knee-deep against the walls of Bedford House, under the shadow of great trees which overhung them.

We should have strolled along under the arcade or portico-walk just built by Inigo Jones, and perhaps have gone in to see his new Church of St. Paul's, Covent Garden. But, after all, the great attraction then would have been what the memory of it is now. So we should have hurried on past the piazzas and the church and the fruits and the

flowers, to the corner of Russell Street and Bow Street, to Will's Coffee-House, the center of all of the literary life of the day; the gathering-place of wits and beaux, of scholars and courtiers. There we might perhaps have been admitted by Robin the porter, and have met the great Duke of Ormond and the witty Earls of Rochester and Dorset, with Davenant and Waller and Sedley and a dozen others.

But we should have gone, as they did, hoping to see and hear the old potentate who reigned supreme at Will's and gave it its fame; who had the big chair by its fire in winter and the best corner of the balcony in summer, —

"The greatest craftsman in English letters,"
"Glorious John,"
"The Father of English Criticism,"
"The man who found the English language brick and left it marble,"
"The First Poet of the Second Class,"
"The noble and puissant Founder of the Age of Prose and Reason,"
"The man who surveyed and laid out the whole estate of modern English Prose,"
"The great Mr. Dryden."

We have seen the laying of the corner-stones of English poetry, the Narrative of Chaucer, the Romance of Spenser, the Drama of Shakespeare, the Epic of Milton; and now for a time we leave the company of these our greatest poets and take up with the best society we can find in the last half of the seventeenth century. When Dryden was born, in 1631, in the little village of Aldwinckle-All-Saints, in Northamptonshire, Milton was only twenty-three years old, and Charles the First was ruling over England. But Milton never seems

to belong to the Stuarts, and, indeed, has been called "the last of the Elizabethans"; whereas Dryden is the representative poet of his own day, and championed its ideas and used its language and fought its quarrels with the best. Dryden was the son of a gentleman of some rank and estate, and he was sent when a boy to Westminster School, to Dr. Busby with his famous little birch, and then to Cambridge University, where he got into some trouble. Though he finally took a degree, he revenged himself for this trouble in his favorite way — a way which a college boy in our day would think rather disloyal — by writing in his own famous heroic couplets:

> "Oxford to him a dearer name shall be
> Than his own mother University;
> Thebes did his green, unknowing youth engage —
> He chooses Athens in his riper age."

When Dryden was twenty-four he came to London to be secretary to one of his kinsmen, a sturdy Puritan, a friend of the Protector, and when Cromwell died Dryden wrote an elegy on him; but in a very few months Charles the Second came back from the gay dissipations of his French exile to rule in England, and Dryden quickly made his peace by "Astrea Redux," — some very flattering lines on the return of the king.

When he was thirty-two years old he was married to the Lady Elizabeth Howard. She was without fortune, and he was poor and found that he must write. Accordingly he made up his mind to write what would be successful and well paid, for he said, "He who lives to please must please, to live." Unfortunately for Dryden, the things which pleased the king and the court in the times of Charles the Second, "The Merry Monarch," were very coarse and vulgar plays.

Of these Dryden wrote twenty-eight, but they are now never acted and seldom read, and so, in spite of many fine passages in them, we are glad to take the advice of the great French critic, Monsieur Taine, and "leave them to the obscurity which they deserve." Dryden wrote many of these plays in his heroic couplets, which he tried to prove were more classic and beautiful than the blank verse of Shakespeare and the other Elizabethan writers, and by so doing, Doctor Johnson said, "he tuned the numbers of English verse"; but he gave up the idea of rhyme in the drama himself before he died, and he never made many converts to it among other people.

In the prefaces of these plays he wrote such fine and forcible prose, and gave such clever arguments in favor of his views, that the prefaces are often quoted when the plays are forgotten.

When Charles died and James the Second, an ardent Catholic, came to the throne, Dryden, who had already changed the Puritan for the Episcopal faith, was converted again, and became a Catholic too, and not long after was made Poet Laureate, as Spenser, Daniel, Jonson, and Davenant had been before him.

In his day "poetical and political squabbles, petty intrigues, libels, lampoons, and satires" kept all the poets busy, and Dryden gained great fame by his satires of "Absalom and Achitophel," written, it is said, at the command of Charles the Second, as a weapon to fight the intrigue of the Earl of Shaftesbury and the young Duke of Monmouth; "The Medal," a second satire on Shaftesbury, said to have been also suggested and handsomely rewarded by the king; and the "Mac Flecknoe," written to avenge himself on Shadwell, who had replied to Dryden's "Medal" in a scurrilous yet stinging poem, "The Medal of John Bayes." "The Religio

Laici" he wrote to explain his early religious views. "The Hind and the Panther" accounts for his second conversion, "the Hind" representing the Roman Catholic Church, and "the Panther" the Church of England. The "Annus Mirabilis" is a description of the notable year 1666, with its Dutch war and its great fire of London.

Of his quarrels with Rochester and the drubbing which the poor poet got in Rose Alley; and of his squabbles with Settle and Shadwell; and of his coolness with Swift, to whom he said, "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet" (as Milton had said of himself, "a good rhymist, but no poet"), we hear on every side. It is pleasanter reading to turn to his work of translation.

When the English people had still one more change of rulers, and William and Mary, the Protestants, came to the throne, Dryden lost his place of Laureate, with his two hundred pounds salary, for he could not change his faith still again.

He was poor. He had lost all the court favor which made him brilliant and powerful while he was writing his plays, and his poems, and his "Essay on Dramatic Poesy," and the like; but he set himself vigorously to work to translate the "Æneid," saying: "What Virgil wrote in the vigor of his age, in plenty and at ease, I have undertaken to translate in my declining years, struggling with want, oppressed with sickness, curbed in my genius, liable to be misconstrued in all I write." This translation, with a book of fables, — stories from the early English of Chaucer, the Latin of Ovid, and the Italian of Boccaccio, — was almost the last work of Dryden. In his forty years of sturdy labor he wrote panegyrics, odes on public events, dramas, argumentative poems, essays, prefaces, prologues and epilogues, satires literary and political, translations, epigrams, lyrics, and odes, and his busy

pen earned its honors by hard work. "His talents were like the wings of an ostrich, they helped him to outrun the rest of the world, but they could not make him soar."

A little while before he died, an old man of nearly seventy years, he wrote his splendid "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day," afterwards set to music by the great musician, Handel. The stewards of the musical festival came to ask him to write it for the feast day of their patron saint, to whom he had already dedicated one fine ode, and the story goes that this second ode was written complete in twenty-four hours, and that Dryden was so pleased with it that he said himself: "It is the greatest ode that has ever been written in the English language," and he added, "or that ever will be."

On May Day in the year 1700 Dryden died, and was buried with honors in Westminster Abbey, between Chaucer and Cowley. Sheffield, the Duke of Buckingham, had a bust placed over him in the Poets' Corner, and Pope wrote under it:

> "This Sheffield raised: the sacred dust below
> Was Dryden's once — the rest who does not know?"

In our day we have come to think that we "know the rest" by seeing that Dryden, if not a very great poet of the first rank, was a very great man of letters, — "the greatest literary chief in England, the veteran field marshal of letters, the marked man of all Europe, and the center of the school of wits who daily gathered around his chair and tobacco-pipe at Will's."

SONGS.

From

THE INDIAN EMPEROR.

Ah fading joy! how quickly art thou past!
Yet we thy ruin haste.
As if the cares of human life were few,
We seek out new:
And follow fate, which would too fast pursue.

See, how on every bough the birds express,
In their sweet notes, their happiness.
They all enjoy, and nothing spare;
But on their mother, Nature, lay their care:
Why then should man, the lord of all below,
Such troubles choose to know,
As none of all his subjects undergo?

Hark, hark, the waters fall, fall, fall,
And with a murmuring sound
Dash, dash, upon the ground,
To gentle slumbers call.

From

THE INDIAN EMPEROR.

I LOOKED and saw within the book of fate,
Where many days did lour,
When lo! one happy hour
Leaped up, and smiled to save the sinking state;
A day shall come when in thy power
Thy cruel foes shall be;
Then shall thy land be free:
And thou in peace shall reign;
But take, oh take that opportunity,
Which once refused will never come again.

From

THE MAIDEN QUEEN.

I FEED a flame within, which so torments me,
That it both pains my heart, and yet contents me:
'T is such a pleasing smart, and I so love it,
That I had rather die, than once remove it.

Yet he, for whom I grieve, shall never know it;
My tongue does not betray, nor my eyes show it.
Not a sigh, nor a tear, my pain discloses,
But they fall silently, like dew on roses.

Thus, to prevent my love from being cruel,
My heart 's the sacrifice, as 't is the fuel:

And while I suffer this to give him quiet,
My faith rewards my love, though he deny it.

On his eyes will I gaze, and there delight me:
Where I conceal my love no frown can fright me:
To be more happy, I dare not aspire;
Nor can I fall more low, mounting no higher.

From

AMBOYNA.

Song of the Sea-Fight.

Who ever saw a noble sight,
That never viewed a brave sea-fight!
Hang up your bloody colours in the air,
Up with your fights, and your nettings prepare;
Your merry mates cheer, with a lusty bold spright,
Now each man his brindice, and then to the fight.
St. George, St. George, we cry;
The shouting Turks reply.
Oh now it begins, and the gunroom grows hot,
Ply it with culverin and with small shot;
Hark, does it not thunder? no, 't is the guns roar,
The neighbouring billows are turned into gore;
Now each man must resolve to die,
For here the coward cannot fly.
Drums and trumpets toll the knell,
And culverins the passing bell.

Now, now they grapple, and now board amain;
Blow up the hatches, they 're off all again:
Give them a broadside, the dice run at all,
Down comes the mast and yard, and tacklings fall;
She grows giddy now, like blind Fortune's wheel,
She sinks there, she sinks, she turns up her keel.
Who ever beheld so noble a sight,
As this so brave, so bloody sea-fight!

AURENG-ZEBE.

From

ACT IV., SCENE I.

WHEN I consider life, 't is all a cheat,
Yet, fooled with hope, men favor the deceit,
Trust on and think to-morrow will repay —
To-morrow 's falser than the former day,
Lies worse, and while it says we shall be blest
With some new joys, cuts off what we possest.
Strange cozenage! None would live past years again,
Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain,
And from the dregs of life think to receive
What the first sprightly running could not give.
I 'm tired with waiting for this chemic gold
Which fools us young and beggars us when old.

ALL FOR LOVE.

From

ACT I., SCENE I.

Antony.

LIE there, thou shadow of an emperor;
The place thou pressest on thy mother earth
Is all thy empire now: now it contains thee;
Some few days hence, and then 't will be too large,
When thou 'rt contracted in thy narrow urn,
Shrunk to a few cold ashes; then Octavia,
For Cleopatra will not live to see it,
Octavia then will have thee all her own,
And bear thee in her widowed hand to Caesar;
Caesar will weep, the crocodile will weep
To see his rival of the universe
Lie still and peaceful there. I 'll think no more on 't.—
Give me some music.

From

ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL.

Character of Achitophel (Shaftesbury).

OF these the false Achitophel was first;
A name to all succeeding ages cursed:
For close designs, and crooked counsel fit;
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
Restless, unfixed in principles and place;

In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace:
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy-body to decay,
And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.
A daring pilot in extremity,
Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high
He sought the storms; but for a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit.
Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
Else why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please;
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?

* * * *

In friendship false, implacable in hate;
Resolved to ruin or to rule the state,
To compass this the triple bond he broke;
The pillars of the public safety shook;
And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke.
Then seized with fear, yet still affecting fame,
Usurped a patriot's all-atoning name.
So easy still it proves, in factious times,
With public zeal to cancel private crimes.
How safe is treason, and how sacred ill,
Where none can sin against the people's will,
Where crowds can wink, and no offence be known,
Since in another's guilt they find their own!
Yet fame deserved no enemy can grudge;
The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge.

From

MAC FLECKNOE.

All human things are subject to decay,
And when fate summons, monarchs must obey.
This Flecknoe found, who, like Augustus, young
Was called to empire, and had governed long;
In prose and verse, was owned, without dispute,
Through all the realms of Nonsense, absolute.
This aged prince, now flourishing in peace,
And blessed with issue of a large increase,
Worn out with business, did at length debate
To settle the succession of the state:
And, pondering, which of all his sons was fit
To reign, and wage immortal war with wit,
Cried, "'T is resolved; for nature pleads, that he
Should only rule, who most resembles me.
Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dulness from his tender years:
Shadwell alone, of all my sons, is he,
Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.
The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense.
Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike through, and make a lucid interval;
But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
Besides, his goodly fabric fills the eye,
And seems designed for thoughtless majesty:

Thoughtless as monarch oaks, that shade the plain,
And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign."

From

THE PROLOGUE TO THE TEMPEST.

As when a tree 's cut down, the secret root
Lives underground, and thence new branches shoot,
So from old Shakespeare's honoured dust this day
Springs up and buds a new reviving play:
Shakespeare, who (taught by none) did first impart
To Fletcher wit, to labouring Jonson art;
He, monarch-like, gave those, his subjects, law,
And is that Nature which they paint and draw.
Fletcher reached that which on his heights did grow,
Whilst Jonson crept, and gathered all below.
This did his love, and this his mirth digest:
One imitates him most, the other best.
If they have since outwrit all other men,
'T is with the drops which fell from Shakespeare's pen.
The storm which vanished on the neighbouring shore
Was taught by Shakespeare's Tempest first to roar.
That innocence and beauty, which did smile
In Fletcher, grew on this enchanted isle.
But Shakespeare's magic could not copied be;
Within that circle none durst walk but he.

Under

MR. MILTON'S PICTURE.

BEFORE HIS PARADISE LOST.

THREE Poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed;
The next in majesty; in both, the last.
The force of nature could no further go:
To make a third she joined the former two.

From

PALAMON AND ARCITE,

OR

THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

Translated from Chaucer.

THUS year by year they pass, and day by day,
Till once, 't was on the morn of cheerful May,
The young Emilia, fairer to be seen
Than the fair lily on the flowery green,
More fresh than May herself in blossoms new
(For with the rosy colour strove her hue),
Waked, as her custom was, before the day,
To do the observance due to sprightly May:
For sprightly May commands our youth to keep
The vigils of her night, and breaks their sluggard sleep;

Each gentle breast with kindly warmth she moves;
Inspires new flames, revives extinguished loves.
In this remembrance Emily ere day
Arose, and dressed herself in rich array;
Fresh as the month, and as the morning fair:
Adown her shoulders fell her length of hair:
A riband did the braided tresses bind,
The rest was loose, and wantoned in the wind:
Aurora had but newly chased the night,
And purpled o'er the sky with blushing light,
When to the garden walk she took her way,
To sport and trip along in cool of day,
And offer maiden vows in honour of the May.
At every turn, she made a little stand,
And thrust among the thorns her lily hand
To draw the rose, and every rose she drew
She shook the stalk, and brushed away the dew;
Then party-coloured flowers of white and red
She wove, to make a garland for her head:
This done, she sung and carolled out so clear,
That men and angels might rejoice to hear:
Even wondering Philomel forgot to sing;
And learned from her to welcome in the spring.

TE DEUM.

Thee, Sovereign God, our grateful accents praise;
We own Thee Lord, and bless Thy wondrous ways;
To Thee, Eternal Father, earth's whole frame

With loudest trumpets sounds immortal fame.
Lord God of Hosts! for Thee the heavenly powers
With sounding anthems fill the vaulted towers.
Thy Cherubims thrice Holy, Holy, Holy cry;
Thrice Holy all the Seraphims reply,
And thrice returning echoes endless songs supply.
Both heaven and earth Thy majesty display;
They owe their beauty to Thy glorious ray.
Thy praises fill the loud apostles' quire:
The train of prophets in the song conspire.
Legions of Martyrs in the chorus shine,
And vocal blood with vocal music join.
By these Thy church, inspired by heavenly art,
Around the world maintains a second part,
And tunes her sweetest notes, O God to Thee,
The Father of unbounded majesty;
The Son, adored co-partner of Thy seat,
And equal everlasting Paraclete.
Thou King of Glory, Christ of the Most High,
Thou co-eternal filial Deity;
Thou who, to save the world's impending doom,
Vouchsafedst to dwell within a Virgin's womb;
Old tyrant Death disarmed, before Thee flew
The bolts of heaven, and back the foldings drew,
To give access, and make Thy faithful way;
From God's right hand Thy filial beams display.
Thou art to judge the living and the dead;
Then spare those souls for whom Thy veins have bled.
O take us up amongst Thy blessed above,
To share with them Thy everlasting love.

Preserve, O Lord! Thy people, and enhance
Thy blessing on Thine own inheritance.
For ever raise their hearts, and rule their ways,
Each day we bless Thee, and proclaim Thy praise;
No age shall fail to celebrate Thy name,
No hour neglect Thy everlasting fame.
Preserve our souls, O Lord, this day from ill;
Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy still:
As we have hoped, do Thou reward our pain;
We 've hoped in Thee, let not our hope be vain.

EPISTLE TO CONGREVE.

To my dear friend Mr. Congreve, on his comedy called "The Double Dealer."

Well then, the promised hour is come at last,
The present age of wit obscures the past:
Strong were our sires, and as they fought they writ,
Conquering with force of arms, and dint of wit:
Theirs was the giant race, before the flood:
And thus, when Charles returned, our empire stood.
Like Janus he the stubborn soil manured,
With rules of husbandry the rankness cured;
Tamed us to manners, when the stage was rude;
And boisterous English wit with art endued.
Our age was cultivated thus at length;
But what we gained in skill we lost in strength.
Our builders were with want of genius cursed;
The second temple was not like the first:

Till you, the best Vitruvius, come at length;
Our beauties equal, but excel our strength.
Firm Doric pillars found your solid base:
The fair Corinthian crowns the higher space:
Thus all below is strength, and all above is grace.
In easy dialogue is Fletcher's praise;
He moved the mind, but had not power to raise.
Great Jonson did by strength of judgment please;
Yet, doubling Fletcher's force, he wants his ease.
In differing talents both adorned their age;
One for the study, t' other for the stage.
But both to Congreve justly shall submit,
One matched in judgment, both o'ermatched in wit.
In him all beauties of this age we see,
Etherege his courtship, Southern's purity,
The satire, wit, and strength of manly Wycherley.
All this in blooming youth you have achieved:
Nor are your foiled contemporaries grieved.
So much the sweetness of your manners move,
We cannot envy you, because we love.
Fabius might joy in Scipio, when he saw
A beardless consul made against the law,
And join his suffrage to the votes of Rome,
Though he with Hannibal was overcome.
Thus old Romano bowed to Raphael's fame,
And scholar to the youth he taught became.
Oh that your brows my laurel had sustained!
Well had I been deposed, if you had reigned:
The father had descended for the son;
For only you are lineal to the throne.

Thus, when the state one Edward did depose,
A greater Edward in his room arose.
But now, not I, but poetry is cursed;
For Tom the second reigns like Tom the first.
But let them not mistake my patron's part,
Nor call his charity their own desert.
Yet this I prophesy; thou shalt be seen,
(Though with some short parenthesis between)
High on the throne of wit, and, seated there,
Not mine, that 's little, but thy laurel wear.
Thy first attempt an early promise made;
That early promise this has more than paid.
So bold, yet so judiciously you dare,
That your least praise is to be regular.
Time, place, and action, may with pains be wrought;
But genius must be born, and never can be taught.
This is your portion; this your native store;
Heaven, that but once was prodigal before,
To Shakespeare gave as much; she could not give him more.
Maintain your post: that 's all the fame you need;
For 't is impossible you should proceed.
Already I am worn with cares and age,
And just abandoning the ungrateful stage:
Unprofitably kept at Heaven's expense,
I live a rent-charge on His providence:
But you, whom every muse and grace adorn,
Whom I foresee to better fortune born,
Be kind to my remains; and oh, defend,
Against your judgment, your departed friend!

Let not the insulting foe my fame pursue,
But shade those laurels which descend to you:
And take for tribute what these lines express:
You merit more; nor could my love do less.

THE ILIAD.

From

BOOK VI.

Thus having said, brave Hector went to see
His virtuous wife, the fair Andromache.
He found her not at home; for she was gone,
Attended by her maid and infant son,
To climb the steepy tower of Ilion:
From whence, with heavy heart, she might survey
The bloody business of the dreadful day.
Her mournful eyes she cast around the plain,
And sought the lord of her desires in vain.
But he, who thought his peopled palace bare,
When she, his only comfort, was not there,
Stood in the gate, and asked of every one
Which way she took, and whither she was gone:
If to the court, or, with his mother's train,
In long procession to Minerva's fane?
The servants answered, neither to the court,
Where Priam's sons and daughters did resort,
Nor to the temple was she gone, to move
With prayers the blue-eyed progeny of Jove:

But more solicitous for him alone
Than all their safety, to the tower was gone,
There to survey the labours of the field,
Where the Greeks conquer, and the Trojans yield;
Swiftly she passed, with fear and fury wild;
The nurse went lagging after with the child.
This heard, the noble Hector made no stay:
The admiring throng divide to give him way;
He passed through every street, by which he came,
And at the gate he met the mournful dame.
His wife beheld him, and with eager pace
Flew to his arms, to meet a dear embrace:
His wife, who brought in dower Cilicia's crown,
And in herself a greater dower alone:
Aetion's heir, who on the woody plain
Of Hippoplacus did in Thebe reign.
Breathless she flew, with joy and passion wild:
The nurse came lagging after with the child.
The royal babe upon her breast was laid;
Who, like the morning star, his beams displayed.
Scamandrius was his name, which Hector gave,
From that fair flood which Ilion's wall did lave:
But him Astyanax the Trojans call,
From his great father, who defends the wall.
Hector beheld him with a silent smile:
His tender wife stood weeping by the while:
Pressed in her own, his warlike hand she took,
Then sighed, and thus prophetically spoke:
"Thy dauntless heart (which I foresee too late)

Too daring man, will urge thee to thy fate:
Nor dost thou pity, with a parent's mind,
This helpless orphan, whom thou leav'st behind;
Nor me, the unhappy partner of thy bed,
Who must in triumph by the Greeks be led;
They seek thy life, and, in unequal fight
With many, will oppress thy single might:
Better it were for miserable me
To die, before the fate which I foresee.
For ah! what comfort can the world bequeath
To Hector's widow, after Hector's death?
"Eternal sorrow and perpetual tears
Began my youth, and will conclude my years:
I have no parents, friends, nor brothers left;
By stern Achilles all of life bereft.
Then when the walls of Thebes he overthrew,
His fatal hand my royal father slew;
He slew Aetion, but despoiled him not;
Nor in his hate the funeral rites forgot;
Armed as he was he sent him whole below,
And reverenced thus the manes of his foe:
A tomb he raised; the mountain nymphs around
Inclosed with planted elms the holy ground.
"My seven brave brothers in one fatal day
To Death's dark mansions took the mournful way;
Slain by the same Achilles, while they keep
The bellowing oxen and the bleating sheep.
My mother, who the royal sceptre swayed,
Was captive to the cruel victor made,
And hither led; but, hence redeemed with gold,

Her native country did again behold,
And but beheld: for soon Diana's dart,
In an unhappy chase, transfixed her heart.
"But thou, my Hector, art thyself alone
My parents, brothers, and my lord in one.
Oh, kill not all my kindred o'er again,
Nor tempt the dangers of the dusty plain;
But in this tower, for our defence, remain.
Thy wife and son are in thy ruin lost;
This is a husband's and a father's post.
The Scæan gate commands the plains below:
Here marshal all thy soldiers as they go;
And hence with other hands repel the foe.
By yon wild fig-tree lies their chief ascent,
And thither all their powers are daily bent;
The two Ajaces have I often seen,
And the wronged husband of the Spartan queen:
With him his greater brother; and with these
Fierce Diomede and bold Meriones:
Uncertain if by augury or chance,
But by this easy rise they all advance;
Guard well that pass, secure of all beside."
To whom the noble Hector thus replied:
"That and the rest are in my daily care;
But, should I shun the dangers of the war,
With scorn the Trojans would reward my pains,
And their proud ladies with their sweeping trains.
The Grecian swords and lances I can bear;
But loss of honour is my only fear.
Shall Hector, born to war, his birthright yield,

Belie his courage, and forsake the field?
Early in rugged arms I took delight,
And still have been the foremost in the fight:
With dangers dearly have I bought renown,
And am the champion of my father's crown.
And yet my mind forebodes, with sure presage,
That Troy shall perish by the Grecian rage.
The fatal day draws on, when I must fall,
And universal ruin cover all.
Not Troy itself, though built by hands divine,
Nor Priam, nor his people, nor his line,
My mother, nor my brothers of renown,
Whose valour yet defends the unhappy town;
Not these, nor all their fates which I foresee,
Are half of that concern I have for thee.
I see, I see thee, in that fatal hour,
Subjected to the victor's cruel power;
Led hence a slave to some insulting sword,
Forlorn, and trembling at a foreign lord;
A spectacle in Argos, at the loom,
Gracing with Trojan fights a Grecian room;
Or from deep wells the living stream to take,
And on thy weary shoulders bring it back.
While, groaning under this laborious life,
They insolently call thee Hector's wife;
Upbraid thy bondage with thy husband's name;
And from my glory propagate thy shame.
This when they say, thy sorrows will increase
With anxious thoughts of former happiness;
That he is dead who could thy wrongs redress.

But I, oppressed with iron sleep before,
Shall hear thy unavailing cries no more."
He said —
Then, holding forth his arms, he took his boy,
The pledge of love and other hope of Troy.
The fearful infant turned his head away,
And on his nurse's neck reclining lay,
His unknown father shunning with affright,
And looking back on so uncouth a sight;
Daunted to see a face with steel o'erspread,
And his high plume that nodded o'er his head.
His sire and mother smiled with silent joy,
And Hector hastened to relieve his boy;
Dismissed his burnished helm, that shone afar,
The pride of warriors, and the pomp of war:
The illustrious babe, thus reconciled, he took;
Hugged in his arms, and kissed, and thus he spoke:
"Parent of gods and men, propitious Jove,
And you bright synod of the Powers above;
On this my son your gracious gifts bestow;
Grant him to live, and great in arms to grow,
To reign in Troy, to govern with renown,
To shield the people, and assert the crown:
That when hereafter he from war shall come,
And bring his Trojans peace and triumph home,
Some aged man, who lives this act to see,
And who in former times remembered me,
May say, 'The son in fortitude and fame
Outgoes the mark, and drowns his father's name':

That at these words his mother may rejoice,
And add her suffrage to the public voice."
Thus having said,
He first with suppliant hands the gods adored:
Then to the mother's arms the child restored:
With tears and smiles she took her son, and pressed
The illustrious infant to her fragrant breast.
He, wiping her fair eyes, indulged her grief,
And eased her sorrows with this last relief:
"My wife and mistress, drive thy fears away,
Nor give so bad an omen to the day;
Think not it lies in any Grecian's power,
To take my life before the fatal hour.
When that arrives, nor good nor bad can fly
The irrevocable doom of destiny.
Return, and to divert thy thoughts at home,
There task thy maids, and exercise the loom,
Employed in works that womankind become.
The toils of war and feats of chivalry
Belong to men, and most of all to me."
At this, for new replies he did not stay,
But laced his crested helm, and strode away.
His lovely consort to her house returned,
And looking often back, in silence mourned:
Home when she came, her secret woe she vents,
And fills the palace with her loud laments;
These loud laments her echoing maids restore,
And Hector, yet alive, as dead deplore.

A SONG

FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY.

I.

From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began:
When nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
Arise, ye more than dead.
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

II.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
His listening brethren stood around,
And, wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound.
Less than a God they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell,
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

III.

The trumpet's loud clangor
  Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger,
  And mortal alarms.
The double, double, double beat
  Of the thundering drum
  Cries, hark ! the foes come ;
Charge, charge, 't is too late to retreat.

IV.

The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

V.

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs, and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion
  For the fair, disdainful dame.

VI.

But oh ! what art can teach,
  What human voice can reach,
The sacred organ's praise ?
  Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
  To mend the choirs above.

VII.

Orpheus could lead the savage race;
And trees uprooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre:
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appeared
Mistaking earth for heaven.

Grand Chorus.

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blessed above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.

ALEXANDER'S FEAST;

OR,

THE POWER OF MUSIC:

An Ode in Honour of St. Cecilia's Day.

I.

'T was at the royal feast, for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son:

Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne:
His valiant peers were placed around,
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound;
(So should desert in arms be crowned.)
The lovely Thais, by his side,
Sate like a blooming Eastern bride
In flower of youth and beauty's pride.
Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

Chorus.

Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

II.

Timotheus, placed on high
Amid the tuneful quire,
With flying fingers touched the lyre:
The trembling notes ascend the sky,
And heavenly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove,
Who left his blissful seats above,
(Such is the power of mighty love.)

A dragon's fiery form belied the god:
Sublime on radiant spires he rode,
When he to fair Olympia pressed:
And while he sought her snowy breast:
Then, round her slender waist he curled,
And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign of the world.
The listening crowd admire the lofty sound,
A present deity! they shout around:
A present deity! the vaulted roofs rebound:
With ravished ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

Chorus.

With ravished ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

III.

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician sung,
Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young:
The jolly god in triumph comes;
Sound the trumpets; beat the drums;
Flushed with a purple grace
He shows his honest face:

Now give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes!
Bacchus, ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain;
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

Chorus.

Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

IV.

Soothed with the sound the king grew vain;
Fought all his battles o'er again;
And thrice he routed all his foes; and thrice he slew the slain.
The master saw the madness rise;
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;
And, while he heaven and earth defied,
Changed his hand, and checked his pride.
He chose a mournful muse
Soft pity to infuse:
He sung Darius great and good,
By too severe a fate,
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,

Fallen from his high estate,
And welt'ring in his blood;
Deserted, at his utmost need,
By those his former bounty fed;
On the bare earth exposed he lies,
With not a friend to close his eyes.
With downcast looks the joyless victor sate
Revolving in his altered soul
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole;
And tears began to flow.

Chorus.

Revolving in his altered soul
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole;
And tears began to flow.

v.

The mighty master smiled, to see
That love was in the next degree;
'T was but a kindred-sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.
Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.
War, he sung, is toil and trouble;
Honour, but an empty bubble;
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying:
If the world be worth thy winning,

Think, oh think it worth enjoying:
Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
Take the goods the gods provide thee.
The many rend the skies with loud applause;
So Love was crowned, but Music won the cause.
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again:
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

Chorus.

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again:
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

VI.

Now strike the golden lyre again:
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain!
Break his bands of sleep asunder,
And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark, hark! the horrid sound
Has raised up his head:
As awaked from the dead,

And amazed, he stares around.
"Revenge, revenge," Timotheus cries,
"See the furies arise:
See the snakes that they rear,
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts that in battle were slain,
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain:
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew.
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes,
And glittering temples of their hostile gods!"
The princes applaud with a furious joy;
And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.

Chorus.

And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.

VII.

Thus, long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,
While organs yet were mute,
Timotheus, to his breathing flute
And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.
At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown;
He raised a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down.

Grand Chorus.

At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown;
He raised a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down.

VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS!

PARAPHRASE.

CREATOR Spirit, by whose aid
The world's foundations first were laid,
Come visit every pious mind;
Come pour Thy joys on human kind;
From sin and sorrow set us free,
And make Thy temples worthy Thee.
O Source of uncreated light,
The Father's promised Paraclete!
Thrice Holy Fount, thrice Holy Fire,
Our hearts with heavenly love inspire;
Come, and Thy sacred unction bring
To sanctify us, while we sing.
Plenteous of Grace, descend from high,
Rich in Thy sevenfold energy!
Thou strength of His Almighty hand,
Whose power does heaven and earth command.
Proceeding Spirit, our defence,
Who dost the gift of tongues dispense,
And crown'st Thy gift with eloquence,
Refine and purge our earthly parts;
But, oh, inflame and fire our hearts!
Our frailties help, our vice control,
Submit the senses to the soul;
And when rebellious they are grown,
Then lay Thy hand, and hold 'em down.

Chase from our minds the infernal foe,
And peace, the fruit of love, bestow;
And lest our feet should step astray,
Protect and guide us in the way.

Make us eternal truths receive,
And practise all that we believe:
Give us Thyself, that we may see
The Father, and the Son, by Thee.

Immortal honour, endless fame,
Attend the Almighty Father's name:
The Saviour Son be glorified,
Who for lost man's redemption died:
And equal adoration be,
Eternal Paraclete, to Thee.

VI. ALEXANDER POPE.

1688–1744.

One fine morning in the last days of the seventeenth century, nearly two hundred years ago, a small schoolboy in London slipped in with a crowd of gay wits and men of fashion to Will's Coffee-House, to have a look at the great Mr. Dryden. The boy was not twelve years old, puny, dwarfed and deformed, and so sickly and insignificant that the lookers-on must have wondered why the feeble little morsel of humanity should be there. If they had asked the boy, however, he could have given a good account of himself. He had come because he admired Mr. Dryden's verse and longed to see for himself the man whom he had taken for a master and a model; because better than anything else he loved books and book makers; in short, because his small, distorted body was the cage which held a growing genius, and already he was not a boy, but a precocious man of letters himself. This visit of the boy to Will's gave Dryden, just before he died, a chance to see his great successor, his most brilliant and distinguished follower, Alexander Pope,

"The Little Nightingale,"

"The Little Wasp of Twickenham,"

"The young Papist lad out of Windsor Forest, who had never seen a university in his life, and came and conquered the Dons and the Doctors with his wit";

The man

"who added more phrases to our language than any other but Shakespeare";

"The greatest literary artist England ever saw,"

"King Alexander."

When Pope was born in London, in 1688, his father was a Roman Catholic merchant on Lombard Street, who had accumulated a little property, and soon went to live in Bonfield, in Windsor Forest, taking with him the delicate child, who said afterwards that his life was one long disease. When the boy was eight, he began to study Greek and Latin with a priest; then he went for a few months to two schools; then he studied with another priest, and at twelve he finished his education, as we say. Then he began to read all the poetry in all the languages that he could find, getting the languages, he said, by hunting after the stories and following wherever his fancy led him, "like a boy gathering flowers in the woods and fields just as they fall in his way." This unusual education was enough to make the unusual boy a brilliant wit, if not a learned scholar, and his wit made him hosts of famous and fashionable friends. By the time that he was sixteen, when he had written an ode, and begun an epic, and modernized some Chaucer, and translated some Ovid, and tried his hand at a comedy, and "thought himself the greatest genius that ever was," he began to frequent the coffee-houses, Will's and Button's, and to make friends with all the great men of the day. But he was a dangerous friend. He loved people for a time and then quarreled with them, and straightway wrote bitter, hateful satires about them, which he printed for the benefit of the town. He admired Addison and then quarreled with him, and satirized him splendidly as "Atticus," in his "Epistle to

Arbuthnot." He fell in love with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, one of the beauties and toasts of the Kit-Cat Club, "the liveliest, severest, and wittiest woman of her time," and when she laughed at him, began to hate and lampoon and vilify her as only he could do. To have secured his friendship one must have been rich or well born, or, for some cause or other, famous and brilliant. Then he must have been careful not to offend the touchy, irritable, hot-tempered little man; not to excel him in literary work, for he was desperately jealous; not to ridicule him, for he was immensely sensitive and self-conscious; and with all these traits he was so easy to laugh at! As he grew older his feebleness and deformity increased, and the gentlemen of those days did not hesitate to make a butt of any bodily infirmity. Every one has heard the story, told in various ways, that once Pope was sitting, his chair raised to bring him up to the table (for he was less than four feet high), talking with some gentlemen, when one of them, a naval officer, suggested that a line of Greek which they were discussing would be made plain by putting after it an interrogation point. Pope said to him, very witheringly, "Indeed, and what is an interrogation point?" "Oh," the gentleman replied, "I thought every one knew that. It is a little crooked thing that asks questions."

But with all these infirmities of body and temper, Pope had true friends,— Bolingbroke, Peterborough, Oxford, Swift, Gray, and Arbuthnot; the sisters Martha and Teresa Blount; the artist Richardson; and the wonderful Sir Godfrey Kneller, "who bragged more, spelt worse, and painted better than any artist of his day."

Pope's life was spent in Windsor Forest, in London, and in his famous villa at Twickenham. Here his old mother, one person towards whom his love and tenderness never

failed, lived with him until she was ninety-three, and here Pope himself died in 1744, at fifty-six, having won noble honors and splendid fame.

The "Essay on Criticism" was written when Pope was only twenty-one, in the polished, smooth, heroic couplets, in rhyming lines of ten syllables, which he had learned from Dryden. It was a wonderfully brilliant thing for a young lad to do, though its precepts were not original, and Lady Mary said savagely of it: "I admired Mr. Pope's 'Essay on Criticism' at first very much, because I had not then read any of the ancient critics and did not know that it was all stolen." The "Essay on Man," written many years later, in four letters to the witty, wicked Bolingbroke, was another collection of brilliant sayings which he made into familiar proverbs. The "Rape of the Lock" was written to laugh back into good humor a young lady, Mrs. Arabella Fermor, whose family was indignant because a young gallant, Lord Petre, had cut off a lock of her hair in sport.

The scathing, literary satire, "The Dunciad" ("The Iliad of Dunces"), was written to punish all Pope's small enemies of the pen at a blow. It closes with some fine lines on the "Conquest of Dullness," which Pope himself admired so much that his voice faltered when he repeated them. "And well it might," Johnson said when he heard the story; "they are noble lines." By the translation of the "Iliad" Pope made a small fortune in money, and a great one in reputation. This reputation has changed with the changing years, a hundred and fifty of which have gone since he died. But whatever may be thought of Pope's work as compared with that of his great predecessors and of his great followers, the verdict has never been challenged that he was the chief poet of his own day, the magnificent Augustan age of English letters.

THE ESSAY ON CRITICISM.

From

PART II.

Of all the causes which conspire to blind
Man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind,
What the weak head with strongest bias rules,
Is pride; the never-failing vice of fools.
Whatever nature has in worth denied,
She gives in large recruits of needful pride!
For as in bodies, thus in souls, we find
What wants in blood and spirits, swell'd with wind:
Pride, where wit fails, steps in to our defence,
And fills up all the mighty void of sense.
If once right reason drives that cloud away,
Truth breaks upon us with resistless day.
Trust not yourself; but, your defects to know,
Make use of every friend — and every foe.
A little learning is a dangerous thing!
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring;
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.
Fired at first sight with what the muse imparts,
In fearless youth we tempt the height of arts,
While from the bounded level of our mind,
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind;

But more advanced, behold with strange surprise
New distant scenes of endless science rise!
So, pleased at first, the towering Alps we try,
Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky!
The eternal snows appear already pass'd,
And the first clouds and mountains seem the last:
But, those attain'd, we tremble to survey
The growing labours of the lengthen'd way:
The increasing prospect tires our wandering eyes,
Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!

A perfect judge will read each work of wit
With the same spirit that its author writ:
Survey the whole, nor seek slight faults to find
Where nature moves, and rapture warms the mind;
Nor lose, for that malignant dull delight,
The generous pleasure to be charm'd with wit.
But, in such lays as neither ebb nor flow,
Correctly cold, and regularly low,
That, shunning faults, one quiet tenor keep;
We cannot blame indeed — but we may sleep.
In wit, as nature, what affects our hearts
Is not the exactness of peculiar parts;
'T is not the lip, or eye, we beauty call,
But the joint force and full result of all.
Thus when we view some well-proportion'd dome,
(The world's just wonder, and e'en thine, oh Rome!)
No single parts unequally surprise;
All comes united to the admiring eyes:
No monstrous height, or breadth, or length appear:
The whole at once is bold, and regular.

Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.
In every work regard the writer's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend;
And if the means be just, the conduct true,
Applause, in spite of trivial faults, is due.
As men of breeding, sometimes men of wit,
To avoid great errors, must the less commit;
Neglect the rule each verbal critic lays;
For not to know some trifles, is a praise.
Most critics, fond of some subservient art,
Still make the whole depend upon a part:
They talk of principles, but notions prize,
And all to one loved folly sacrifice.

Once on a time, La Mancha's knight, they say,
A certain bard encountering on the way,
Discoursed in terms as just, with looks as sage,
As e'er could Dennis, of the Grecian stage;
Concluding all were desperate sots and fools,
Who durst depart from Aristotle's rules.
Our author, happy in a judge so nice,
Produced his play, and begg'd the knight's advice;
Made him observe the subject, and the plot,
The manners, passions, unities; what not?
All which, exact to rule, were brought about,
Were but a combat in the lists left out.
"What! leave the combat out?" exclaims the knight.
"Yes, or we must renounce the Stagyrite."—
"Not so, by heaven!" he answers in a rage.
"Knights, squires, and steeds, must enter on the stage."

"So vast a throng the stage can ne'er contain."—
"Then build a new, or act it on a plain."
Thus critics of less judgment than caprice,
Curious, not knowing, not exact, but nice,
Form short ideas; and offend in arts
(As most in manners) by a love to parts.
Some to conceit alone their taste confine,
And glittering thoughts struck out at every line;
Pleased with a work where nothing's just or fit;
One glaring chaos and wild heap of wit.
Poets, like painters, thus unskill'd to trace
The naked nature and the living grace,
With gold and jewels cover every part,
And hide with ornaments their want of art.
True wit is nature to advantage dress'd,
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd;
Something, whose truth convinced at sight we find;
That gives us back the image of our mind.
As shades more sweetly recommend the light,
So modest plainness sets off sprightly wit;
For works may have more wit than does them good,
As bodies perish through excess of blood.
Others for language all their care express,
And value books, as women men, for dress:
Their praise is still,—the style is excellent;
The sense, they humbly take upon content.
Words are like leaves; and where they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.
False eloquence, like the prismatic glass,
Its gaudy colours spreads on every place;

The face of nature we no more survey,
All glares alike, without distinction gay:
But true expression, like the unchanging sun,
Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon:
It gilds all objects, but it alters none.
Expression is the dress of thought, and still
Appears more decent as more suitable:
A vile conceit in pompous words express'd,
Is like a clown in regal purple dress'd;
For different styles with different subjects sort,
As several garbs, with country, town, and court.
Some by old words to fame have made pretence,
Ancients in phrase, mere moderns in their sense;
Such labour'd nothings, in so strange a style,
Amaze the unlearn'd, and make the learned smile.
Unlucky, as Fungoso in the play,
These sparks with awkward vanity display
What the fine gentleman wore yesterday;
And but so mimic ancient wits at best,
As apes our grandsires in their doublets dress'd.
In words, as fashions, the same rule will hold;
Alike fantastic, if too new or old:
Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.
But most by numbers judge a poet's song;
And smooth or rough, with them, is right or wrong:
In the bright muse though thousand charms conspire,
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire;
Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,
Not mend their minds; as some to church repair,

Not for the doctrine, but the music there.
These equal syllables alone require,
Though oft the ear the open vowels tire;
While expletives their feeble aid do join,
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line:
While they ring round the same unvaried chimes,
With sure returns of still expected rhymes;
Where'er you find 'the cooling western breeze,'
In the next line it 'whispers through the trees':
If crystal streams 'with pleasing murmurs creep,'
The reader's threatened (not in vain) with 'sleep':
Then at the last, and only couplet fraught
With some unmeaning thing they call a thought,
A needless Alexandrine ends the song,
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.
Leave such to tune their own dull rhymes, and know
What's roundly smooth, or languishingly slow;
And praise the easy vigour of a line,
Where Denham's strength and Waller's sweetness join.
True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance.
'T is not enough no harshness gives offence,
The sound must seem an echo to the sense:
Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar.
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labours, and the words move slow:
Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain,

Flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main.
Hear how Timotheus' varied lays surprise,
And bid alternate passions fall and rise!
While, at each change, the son of Libyan Jove
Now burns with glory, and then melts with love:
Now his fierce eyes with sparkling fury glow,
Now sighs steal out, and tears begin to flow:
Persians and Greeks like turns of nature found,
And the world's victor stood subdued by sound!
The power of music all our hearts allow,
And what Timotheus was, is Dryden now.

Avoid extremes; and shun the fault of such
Who still are pleased too little or too much.
At every trifle scorn to take offence,
That always shows great pride, or little sense:
Those heads, as stomachs, are not sure the best,
Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest.
Yet let not each gay turn thy rapture move:
For fools admire, but men of sense approve:
As things seem large which we through mists descry,
Dulness is ever apt to magnify.

Some foreign writers, some our own despise;
The ancients only, or the moderns prize:
Thus wit, like faith, by each man is applied
To one small sect, and all are damn'd beside.
Meanly they seek the blessing to confine,
And force that sun but on a part to shine,
Which not alone the southern wit sublimes
But ripens spirits in cold, northern climes;
Which from the first has shone on ages past,

Enlights the present, and shall warm the last;
Though each may feel increases and decays,
And see now clearer and now darker days.
Regard not then if wit be old or new,
But blame the false, and value still the true.
Some ne'er advance a judgment of their own,
But catch the spreading notion of the town;
They reason and conclude by precedent,
And own stale nonsense which they ne'er invent.
Some judge of authors' names, not works, and then
Nor praise nor blame the writings, but the men.
Of all this servile herd, the worst is he
That in proud dulness joins with quality;
A constant critic at the great man's board
To fetch and carry nonsense for my lord.
What woeful stuff this madrigal would be,
In some starved hackney'd sonnetteer, or me!
But let a lord once own the happy lines,
How the wit brightens! how the style refines!
Before his sacred name flies every fault,
And each exalted stanza teems with thought!
The vulgar thus through imitation err;
As oft the learn'd by being singular;
So much they scorn the crowd, that if the throng
By chance go right they purposely go wrong:
So schismatics the plain believers quit,
And are but damn'd for having too much wit.

* * * *

Be thou the first true merit to befriend;
His praise is lost who stays till all commend.

Short is the date, alas! of modern rhymes,
And 't is but just to let them live betimes.
No longer now that golden age appears,
When patriarch-wits survived a thousand years:
Now length of fame (our second life) is lost,
And bare threescore is all e'en that can boast;
Our sons their fathers' failing language see,
And such as Chaucer is, shall Dryden be.
So when the faithful pencil has design'd
Some bright idea of the master's mind,
Where a new world leaps out at his command,
And ready nature waits upon his hand;
When the ripe colours soften and unite,
And sweetly melt into just shade and light;
When mellowing years their full perfection give,
And each bold figure just begins to live;
The treacherous colours the fair art betray,
And all the bright creation fades away!
Unhappy wit, like most mistaken things,
Atones not for that envy which it brings;
In youth alone its empty praise we boast,
But soon the short-lived vanity is lost;
Like some fair flower the early spring supplies,
That gaily blooms, but e'en in blooming dies.

* * * *

If wit so much from ignorance undergo,
Ah, let not learning too commence its foe!
Of old, those met rewards who could excel,
And such were praised who but endeavour'd well;
Though triumphs were to generals only due,

Crowns were reserved to grace the soldiers too.
Now they who reach Parnassus' lofty crown,
Employ their pains to spurn some others down;
And while self-love each jealous writer rules,
Contending wits become the sport of fools:
But still the worst with most regret commend,
For each ill author is as bad a friend.
To what base ends, and by what abject ways,
Are mortals urged through sacred lust of praise!
Ah, ne'er so dire a thirst of glory boast,
Nor in the critic let the man be lost.
Good nature and good sense must ever join;
To err, is human, to forgive divine.

From

ESSAY ON MAN.

EPISTLE I.

Awake, my St. John! leave all meaner things
To low ambition, and the pride of kings:
Let us (since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us, and to die)
Expatiate free o'er all this scene of man;
A mighty maze! but not without a plan:
A wild, where weeds and flowers promiscuous shoot;
Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.
Together let us beat this ample field,
Try what the open, what the covert yield;

The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore,
Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar;
Eye nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise:
Laugh where we must, be candid where we can,
But vindicate the ways of God to man.

I. Say first, of God above, or man below,
What can we reason, but from what we know?
Of man, what see we but his station here,
From which to reason, or to which refer?
Through worlds unnumber'd though the God be known,
'T is ours to trace him only in our own.
He, who through vast immensity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
Observe how system into system runs,
What other planets circle other suns,
What varied being peoples every star,
May tell why heaven has made us as we are.
But of this frame, the bearings and the ties,
The strong connexions nice, dependencies,
Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
Look'd through? or can a part contain the whole?
Is the great chain that draws all to agree,
And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee?

II. Presumptuous man! the reason wouldst thou find,
Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind?
First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,
Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less.
Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made
Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade.

Or ask of yonder argent fields above,
Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove.
Of systems possible, if 't is confess'd,
That wisdom infinite must form the best,
Where all must fall or not coherent be,
And all that rises, rise in due degree;
Then, in the scale of reasoning life, 't is plain,
There must be somewhere, such a rank as man:
And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)
Is only this, if God has placed him wrong?
Respecting man, whatever wrong we call,
May, must be right, as relative to all.
In human works, though laboured on with pain,
A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain:
In God's, one single can its end produce;
Yet serve to second too some other use.
So man, who here seems principal alone,
Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal:
'T is but a part we see, and not a whole.
When the proud steed shall know why man restrains
His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains;
When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,
Is now a victim, and now Egypt's god,
Then shall man's pride and dulness comprehend
His actions', passions', being's use and end;
Why doing, suffering, check'd, impell'd; and why
This hour a slave, the next a deity.
Then say not man 's imperfect, Heaven in fault:
Say rather, man 's as perfect as he ought:

His knowledge measured to his state and place,
His time a moment, and a point his space.
If to be perfect in a certain sphere,
What matter, soon or late, or here or there?
The bless'd to-day is as completely so,
As who began a thousand years ago.

III. Heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate,
All but the page prescribed, their present state;
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know:
Or who could suffer being here below?
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
Pleased to the last, he crops the flowery food,
And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood.
Oh blindness to the future! kindly given,
That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heaven;
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
Wait the great teacher, Death; and God adore.
What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never is, but always to be bless'd:
The soul, uneasy, and confined from home,
Rests and expatiates on a life to come.

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;

His soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
Behind the cloud-topp'd hill, an humbler heaven;
Some safer world in depth of woods embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

IV. Go wiser thou! and in thy scale of sense,
Weigh thy opinion against Providence;
Call imperfection what thou fanciest such;
Say, here he gives too little, there too much:
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
Yet say, if man 's unhappy, God 's unjust:
If man alone engross not Heaven's high care,
Alone made perfect here, immortal there:
Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Re-judge his justice, be the god of God.
In pride, in reasoning pride, our error lies;
All quit the sphere, and rush into the skies.
Pride still is aiming at the bless'd abodes,
Men would be angels, angels would be gods.
Aspiring to be gods, if angels fell,
Aspiring to be angels, men rebel:
And who but wishes to invert the laws
Of order, sins against the Eternal Cause.

V. Ask for what end the heavenly bodies shine,
Earth for whose use? Pride answers, "'T is for mine.
For me kind Nature wakes her genial power;
Suckles each herb, and spreads out every flower;
Annual for me, the grape, the rose, renew
The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings;
For me, health gushes from a thousand springs;
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
My foot-stool earth, my canopy the skies.'
But errs not nature from this gracious end,
From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?
"No," 't is replied, "the first Almighty Cause
Acts not by partial, but by general laws;
The exceptions few; some change since all began
And what created perfect?" — Why then man?
If the great end be human happiness,
Then nature deviates; and can man do less?
As much that end a constant course requires
Of showers and sun-shine, as of man's desires?
As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,
As men for ever temperate, calm, and wise.
If plagues or earthquakes break not Heaven's design,
Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline?
Who knows, but he whose hand the lightning forms,
Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the storms,
Pours fierce ambition in a Cæsar's mind,
Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind?

From pride, from pride, our very reasoning springs;
Account for moral as for natural things:
Why charge we Heaven in those, in these acquit,
In both, to reason right, is to submit.

Better for us, perhaps, it might appear,
Were there all harmony, all virtue here;
That never air or ocean felt the wind,
That never passion discomposed the mind.
But all subsists by elemental strife;
And passions are the elements of life.
The general order since the whole began,
Is kept in nature, and is kept in man.

VI. What would this man? Now upward will he soar
And, little less than angel, would be more;
Now looking downwards, just as grieved appears
To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.
Made for his use all creatures if he call,
Say what their use, had he the powers of all?
Nature to these, without profusion, kind,
The proper organs, proper powers assign'd;
Each seeming want compensated; of course,
Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force;
All in exact proportion to the state;
Nothing to add, and nothing to abate.
Each beast, each insect, happy in its own:
Is Heaven unkind to man, and man alone?
Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
Be pleased with nothing, if not bless'd with all?

The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)
Is not to act or think beyond mankind;

No powers of body or of soul to share,
But what his nature and his state can bear.
Why has not man a microscopic eye?
For this plain reason, man is not a fly.
Say what the use, were finer optics given,
To inspect a mite, not comprehend the heaven?
Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
To smart and agonize at every pore?
Or quick effluvia darting through the brain,
Die of a rose in aromatic pain?
If Nature thunder'd in his opening ears,
And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,
How would he wish that Heaven had left him still
The whispering zephyr, and the purling rill!
Who finds not Providence all good and wise,
Alike in what it gives, and what denies?

VII. Far as creation's ample range extends,
The scale of sensual, mental, powers ascends:
Mark how it mounts to man's imperial race,
From the green myriads in the peopled grass:
What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,
The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam;
Of smell, the headlong lioness between,
And hound sagacious on the tainted green;
Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood,
To that which warbles through the vernal wood!
The spider's touch how exquisitely fine!
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true,
From poisonous herbs extracts the healing dew!

How instinct varies in the grovelling swine,
Compared, half-reasoning elephant, with thine
'Twixt that and reason what nice barrier;
For ever separate, yet for ever near!
Remembrance and reflection how allied;
What thin partitions sense from thought divide!
And middle natures, how they long to join,
Yet never pass the insuperable line!
Without this just gradation, could they be
Subjected, these to those, or all to thee?
The powers of all subdued by thee alone,
Is not thy reason all these powers in one?

VIII. See, through this air, this ocean, and this earth,
All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
Above, how high progressive life may go!
Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
Vast chain of being! which from God began,
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, which no eye can see,
No glass can reach; from infinite to thee;
From thee to nothing. — On superior powers
Were we to press, inferior might on ours;
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broken, the great scale 's destroy'd:
From nature's chain whatever link you strike,
Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.

And, if each system in gradation roll,
Alike essential to the amazing whole,
The least confusion, but in one, not all
That system only, but the whole must fall.

Let earth unbalanced from her orbit fly,
Planets and suns run lawless through the sky;
Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
Being on being wreck'd, and world on world;
Heaven's whole foundations to their centre nod
And nature trembles to the throne of God.
All this dread order break — for whom? for thee?
Vile worm! — oh madness! pride! impiety!

IX. What if the foot, ordain'd the dust to tread,
Or hand, to toil, aspired to be the head?
What if the head, the eye, or ear, repined
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
Just as absurd for any part to claim
To be another in this general frame:
Just as absurd, to mourn the task or pains
The great directing Mind of all ordains.

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
That, changed through all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth, as in the ethereal frame;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns:
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.

X. Cease then, nor order imperfection name:
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
Know thy own point: this kind, this due degree
Of blindness, weakness, Heaven bestows on thee.
Submit. — In this, or any other sphere,
Secure to be as bless'd as thou canst bear:
Safe in the hand of one disposing Power,
Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction which thou canst not see:
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good.
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK.

From

CANTO II.

NOT with more glories, in the ethereal plain,
The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
Launch'd on the bosom of the silver'd Thames.
Fair nymphs and well-dress'd youths around her shone,
But every eye was fix'd on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.

Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those:
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide:
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you 'll forget them all.

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER.

FATHER of all! in every age,
In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

Thou Great First Cause, least understood;
Who all my sense confined
To know but this, That thou art good,
And that myself am blind;

Yet gave me, in this dark estate,
To see the good from ill;
And, binding Nature fast in Fate,
Left free the human will:

What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do,

This, teach me more than hell to shun,
That, more than heaven pursue.

What blessings thy free bounty gives,
Let me not cast away;
For God is paid when man receives:
To enjoy is to obey.

Yet not to earth's contracted span
Thy goodness let me bound,
Or think thee Lord alone of man,
When thousand worlds are round.

Let not this weak, unknowing hand
Presume thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land,
On each I judge thy foe.

If I am right, thy grace impart,
Still in the right to stay:
If I am wrong, O touch my heart
To find that better way.

Save me alike from foolish pride,
Or impious discontent,
At aught thy wisdom has denied,
Or aught thy goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's wo,
To hide the fault I see:
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

Mean though I am, not wholly so,
  Since quicken'd by thy breath;
O lead me, wheresoe'er I go,
  Through this day's life or death.

This day, be bread and peace my lot:
  All else beneath the sun,
Thou know'st if best bestow'd or not,
  And let thy will be done.

To thee, whose temple is all space,
  Whose altar, earth, sea, skies!
One chorus let all beings raise!
  All Nature's incense rise!

THE DUNCIAD.

From

BOOK IV.

In vain, in vain, the all-composing hour
Resistless falls! the muse obeys the power.
She comes! she comes! the sable throne behold
Of night primeval, and of Chaos old!
Before her, fancy's gilded clouds decay,
And all its varying rainbows die away.
Wit shoots in vain his momentary fires,
The meteor drops, and in a flash expires.
As one by one, at dread Medea's strain,
The sickening stars fade off the ethereal plain;

As Argus' eyes, by Hermes' wand oppress'd,
Closed one by one to everlasting rest;
Thus at her felt approach, and secret might,
Art after art goes out, and all is night:
See skulking truth to her old cavern fled,
Mountains of casuistry heap'd o'er her head!
Philosophy, that lean'd on Heaven before,
Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
Physic of metaphysic begs defence,
And metaphysic calls for aid on sense!
See mystery to mathematics fly!
In vain! they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die.
Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires,
And unawares morality expires.
Nor public flame, nor private, dares to shine;
Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine!
Lo! thy dread empire, Chaos! is restored;
Light dies before thy uncreating word:
Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall
And universal darkness buries all.

From

EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT.

Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires
True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires;
Bless'd with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease;

Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserved to blame or to commend,
A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend;
Dreading e'en fools, by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging that he ne'er obliged;
Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause;
While wits and Templars every sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise —
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?

ON A CERTAIN LADY AT COURT.

I KNOW the thing that 's most uncommon;
(Envy, be silent and attend!)
I know a reasonable woman,
Handsome and witty, yet a friend.

Not warp'd by passion, awed by rumour,
Not grave through pride, nor gay through folly.
An equal mixture of good-humour,
And sensible soft melancholy.

'Has she no faults, then,' Envy says, 'sir?'
Yes, she has one, I must aver:
When all the world conspires to praise her,
The woman 's deaf, and does not hear.

EPITAPH ON MRS. CORBET.

Here rests a woman, good without pretence,
Blest with plain reason, and with sober sense;
No conquest she, but o'er herself, desired;
No arts essay'd, but not to be admired.
Passion and pride were to her soul unknown,
Convinced that virtue only is our own.
So unaffected, so composed a mind,
So firm, yet soft, so strong, yet so refined,
Heaven, as its purest gold, by tortures tried;
The saint sustain'd it, but the woman died.

THE ILIAD.

From

BOOK VI.

He said, and pass'd with sad presaging heart
To seek his spouse, his soul's far dearer part;
At home he sought her, but he sought in vain:
She, with one maid of all her menial train,
Had thence retired; and with her second joy,
The young Astyanax, the hope of Troy,

Pensive she stood on Ilion's towery height,
Beheld the war, and sicken'd at the sight;
There her sad eyes in vain her lord explore,
Or weep the wounds her bleeding country bore.
  But he who found not whom his soul desired,
Whose virtue charm'd him as her beauty fired,
Stood in the gates, and ask'd what way she bent
Her parting step? If to the fane she went,
Where late the mourning matrons made resort;
Or sought her sisters in the Trojan court?
Not to the court (replied the attendant train),
Nor mix'd with matrons to Minerva's fane:
To Ilion's steepy tower she bent her way,
To mark the fortunes of the doubtful day.
Troy fled, she heard, before the Grecian sword
She heard, and trembled for her absent lord:
Distracted with surprise, she seem'd to fly,
Fear on her cheek, and sorrow in her eye.
The nurse attended with her infant boy,
The young Astyanax, the hope of Troy.
  Hector, this heard, return'd without delay;
Swift through the town he trod his former way,
Through streets of palaces, and walks of state,
And met the mourner at the Scæan gate.
With haste to meet him sprung the joyful fair,
His blameless wife, Aëtion's wealthy heir:
(Cilician Thebé great Aëtion sway'd,
And Hippoplacus' wide extended shade.)
The nurse stood near, in whose embraces press'd,
His only hope hung smiling at her breast,

Whom each soft charm and early grace adorn,
Fair as the new-born star that gilds the morn.
To this loved infant Hector gave the name
Scamandrius, from Scamander's honour'd stream;
Astyanax the Trojans call'd the boy,
From his great father, the defence of Troy.
Silent the warrior smiled, and pleased resign'd
To tender passions all his mighty mind:
His beauteous princess cast a mournful look,
Hung on his hand, and then dejected spoke;
Her bosom labour'd with a boding sigh,
And the big tear stood trembling in her eye.
Too daring prince! ah, whither dost thou run?
Ah, too forgetful of thy wife and son!
And think'st thou not how wretched we shall be,
A widow I, a helpless orphan he!
For sure such courage length of life denies,
And thou must fall, thy virtue's sacrifice.
Greece in her single heroes strove in vain;
Now hosts oppose thee, and thou must be slain!
Oh grant me, gods! ere Hector meets his doom,
All I can ask of Heaven, an early tomb!
So shall my days in one sad tenor run,
And end with sorrows as they first begun.
No parent now remains my griefs to share,
No father's aid, no mother's tender care.
The fierce Achilles wrapp'd our walls in fire,
Laid Thebé waste, and slew my warlike sire!
His fate compassion in the victor bred;
Stern as he was, he yet revered the dead.

His radiant arms preserved from hostile spoil,
And laid him decent on the funeral pile:
Then raised a mountain where his bones were burn'd:
The mountain-nymphs the rural tomb adorn'd:
Jove's sylvan daughters bade their elms bestow
A barren shade, and in his honour grow.
By the same arm my seven brave brothers fell;
In one sad day beheld the gates of hell:
While the fat herds and snowy flocks they fed,
Amid their fields the hapless heroes bled!
My mother lived to bear the victor's bands,
The queen of Hippoplacia's sylvan lands:
Redeem'd too late, she scarce beheld again
Her pleasing empire and her native plain,
When ah! oppress'd by life-consuming woe,
She fell a victim to Diana's bow.
Yet, while my Hector still survives, I see
My father, mother, brethren, all, in thee:
Alas! my parents, brothers, kindred, all
Once more will perish, if my Hector fall.
Thy wife, thy infant, in thy danger share:
Oh prove a husband's and a father's care!
That quarter most the skilful Greeks annoy,
Where yon wild fig-trees join the walls of Troy:
Thou from this tower defend the important post;
There Agamemnon points his dreadful host,
That pass Tydides, Ajax, strive to gain,
And there the vengeful Spartan fires his train.
Thrice our bold foes the fierce attack have given,
Or led by hopes, or dictated from heaven.

Let others in the field their arms employ,
But stay my Hector here, and guard his Troy.
The chief replied: That post shall be my care,
Not that alone, but all the works of war.
How would the sons of Troy, in arms renown'd
And Troy's proud dames, whose garments sweep the ground,
Attaint the lustre of my former name,
Should Hector basely quit the field of fame?
My early youth was bred to martial pains,
My soul impels me to the embattled plains:
Let me be foremost to defend the throne,
And guard my father's glories, and my own.
Yet come it will, the day decreed by fates:
(How my heart trembles while my tongue relates!)
The day when thou, imperial Troy! must bend,
And see thy warriors fall, thy glories end.
And yet no dire presage so wounds my mind,
My mother's death, the ruin of my kind,
Not Priam's hoary hairs defiled with gore,
Not all my brothers gasping on the shore,
As thine, Andromache! thy griefs I dread;
I see thee trembling, weeping, captive led!
In Argive looms our battles to design,
And woes, of which so large a part was thine!
To bear the victor's hard commands, or bring
The weight of waters from Hyperia's spring.
There, while you groan beneath the load of life,
They cry, Behold the mighty Hector's wife!
Some haughty Greek, who lives thy tears to see,
Embitters all thy woes, by naming me.

The thoughts of glory past, and present shame,
A thousand griefs shall waken at the name!
May I lie cold before that dreadful day,
Press'd with a load of monumental clay!
Thy Hector, wrapt in everlasting sleep,
Shall neither hear thee sigh, nor see thee weep.
Thus having spoke, the illustrious chief of Troy
Stretch'd his fond arms to clasp the lovely boy.
The babe clung crying to his nurse's breast,
Scared at the dazzling helm and nodding crest.
With secret pleasure each fond parent smiled,
And Hector hasted to relieve his child;
The glittering terrors from his brows unbound,
And placed the beaming helmet on the ground.
Then kiss'd the child, and, lifting high in air,
Thus to the gods preferr'd a father's prayer:
O thou! whose glory fills the ethereal throne,
And all ye deathless powers! protect my son!
Grant him, like me, to purchase just renown,
To guard the Trojans, to defend the crown,
Against his country's foes the war to wage,
And rise the Hector of the future age!
So when triumphant from successful toils
Of heroes slain he bears the reeking spoils,
Whole hosts may hail him with deserved acclaim,
And say, This chief transcends his father's fame:
While pleased, amidst the general shouts of Troy,
His mother's conscious heart o'erflows with joy.
He spoke, and fondly gazing on her charms,
Restored the pleasing burden to her arms:

Soft on her fragrant breast the babe he laid,
Hush'd to repose, and with a smile survey'd.
The troubled pleasure soon chastised by fear,
She mingled with the smile a tender tear.
The soften'd chief with kind compassion view'd,
And dried the falling drops, and thus pursued:
Andromache! my soul's far better part!
Why with untimely sorrows heaves thy heart?
No hostile hand can antedate my doom,
Till fate condemns me to the silent tomb.
Fix'd is the term to all the race of earth;
And such the hard condition of our birth,
No force can then resist, no flight can save;
All sink alike, the fearful and the brave.
No more — but hasten to thy tasks at home,
There guide the spindle, and direct the loom:
Me glory summons to the martial scene,
The field of combat is the sphere for men;
Where heroes war, the foremost place I claim,
The first in danger, as the first in fame.
Thus having said, the glorious chief resumes
His towery helmet black with shading plumes.
His princess parts with a prophetic sigh,
Unwilling parts, and oft reverts her eye,
That stream'd at every look: then moving slow,
Sought her own palace, and indulged her woe.
There, while her tears deplored the godlike man,
Through all her train the soft infection ran,
The pious maids their mingled sorrows shed,
And mourn the living Hector, as the dead.

THE ILIAD.

From

BOOK VIII.

Troy yet found grace before the Olympian sire;
He arm'd their hands, and fill'd their breasts with fire.
The Greeks, repulsed, retreat behind their wall,
Or in the trench on heaps confusedly fall.
First of the foe, great Hector march'd along,
With terror clothed, and more than mortal strong.
As the bold hound, that gives the lion chase,
With beating bosom, and with eager pace,
Hangs on his haunch, or fastens on his heels,
Guards as he turns, and circles as he wheels;
Thus oft the Grecians turn'd, but still they flew;
Thus, following Hector, still the hindmost slew.
When flying they had pass'd the trench profound,
And many a chief lay gasping on the ground;
Before the ships a desperate stand they made,
And fired the troops, and call'd the gods to aid.
Fierce on his rattling chariot Hector came;
His eyes like Gorgon shot a sanguine flame
That wither'd all their host: like Mars he stood;
Dire as the monster, dreadful as the god!
Their strong distress the wife of Jove survey'd;
Then pensive thus, to war's triumphant maid:

Oh daughter of that god, whose arm can wield
The avenging bolt, and shake the sable shield!
Now, in this moment of her last despair,

Shall wretched Greece no more confess our care?
Condemn'd to suffer the full force of fate,
And drain the dregs of heaven's relentless hate?
Gods! shall one raging hand thus level all?
What numbers fell! what numbers yet shall fall!
What power divine shall Hector's wrath assuage?
Still swells the slaughter, and still grows the rage!
So spake the imperial regent of the skies;
To whom the goddess with the azure eyes:
Long since had Hector stain'd these fields with gore,
Stretch'd by some Argive on his native shore;
But He, above, the sire of heaven, withstands,
Mocks our attempts and slights our just demands.
The stubborn god, inflexible and hard,
Forgets my service and deserved reward:
Saved I, for this, his favourite son, distress'd,
By stern Euristheus with long labours press'd?
He begg'd, with tears he begg'd, in deep dismay;
I shot from heaven, and gave his arm the day.
Oh had my wisdom known this dire event,
When to grim Pluto's gloomy gates he went;
The triple dog had never felt his chain,
Nor Styx been cross'd, nor hell explored in vain.
Averse to me of all his heaven of gods,
At Thetis' suit the partial Thunderer nods.
To grace her gloomy, fierce, resenting son,
My hopes are frustrate, and my Greeks undone.
Some future day, perhaps, he may be moved
To call his blue-eyed maid his best-beloved.
Haste, launch thy chariot, through yon ranks to ride;

Myself will arm, and thunder at thy side.
Then goddess ! say, shall Hector glory then
(That terror of the Greeks, that man of men,)
When Juno's self, and Pallas shall appear,
All-dreadful in the crimson walks of war !
That mighty Trojan then, on yonder shore,
Expiring, pale, and terrible no more,
Shall feast the fowls, and glut the dogs with gore!
She ceased, and Juno rein'd the steeds with care;
(Heaven's awful empress, Saturn's other heir.)
Pallas, meanwhile, her various veil unbound,
With flowers adorn'd, with art immortal crown'd ;
The radiant robe her sacred fingers wove,
Floats in rich waves, and spreads the court of Jove.
Her father's arms her mighty limbs invest,
His cuirass blazes on her ample breast.
The vigorous power the trembling car ascends ;
Shook by her arm, the massy javelin bends ;
Huge, pondrous, strong ! that, when her fury burns,
Proud tyrants humbles, and whole hosts o'erturns.
Saturnia lends the lash ; the coursers fly.
Smooth glides the chariot through the liquid sky.
Heaven's gates spontaneous open to the powers,
Heaven's golden gates, kept by the winged Hours;
Commission'd in alternate watch they stand,
The sun's bright portals and the skies command ;
Close or unfold the eternal gates of day,
Bar heaven with clouds, or roll those clouds away.
The sounding hinges ring, the clouds divide ;
Prone down the steep of heaven their course they guide.

But Jove incensed, from Ida's top survey'd,
And thus enjoin'd the many-colour'd maid:
Thaumantia! mount the winds, and stop their car;
Against the highest who shall wage the war?
If furious yet they dare the vain debate,
Thus have I spoke, and what I speak is fate;
Their coursers crush'd beneath the wheels shall lie,
Their car in fragments scatter'd o'er the sky!
My lightning these rebellious shall confound,
And hurl them flaming, headlong to the ground,
Condemn'd for ten revolving years to weep
The wounds impress'd by burning thunder deep.
So shall Minerva learn to fear our ire,
Nor dare to combat hers and nature's sire.
For Juno, headstrong and imperious still,
She claims some title to transgress our will.
Swift as the wind, the various-colour'd maid
From Ida's top her golden wings display'd;
To great Olympus' shining gates she flies,
There meets the chariot rushing down the skies.
Restrains their progress from the bright abodes,
And speaks the mandate of the sire of gods:
What frenzy, goddesses! what rage can move
Celestial minds to tempt the wrath of Jove!
Desist, obedient to his high command:
This is his word: and know, his word shall stand.
His lightning your rebellion shall confound,
And hurl you headlong, flaming to the ground:
Your horses crush'd beneath the wheels shall lie,
Your car in fragments scatter'd o'er the sky:

Yourselves condemn'd ten rolling years to weep
The wounds impress'd by burning thunder deep.
So shall Minerva learn to fear his ire,
Nor dare to combat hers and nature's sire.
For Juno, headstrong and imperious still,
She claims some title to transgress his will:
But thee what desperate insolence has driven,
To lift thy lance against the king of heaven?
Then, mounting on the pinions of the wind,
She flew; and Juno thus her rage resign'd:
O daughter of that god, whose arm can wield
The avenging bolt, and shake the dreadful shield!
No more let beings of superior birth
Contend with Jove for this low race of earth.
Triumphant now, now miserably slain,
They breathe or perish as the Fates ordain.
But Jove's high counsels full effect shall find:
And, ever constant ever rule mankind.
She spoke, and backward turn'd her steeds of light,
Adorn'd with manes of gold and heavenly bright.
The Hours unloosed them, panting as they stood,
And heap'd their mangers with ambrosial food.
There tied, they rest in high celestial stalls;
The chariot propp'd against the crystal walls.
The pensive goddesses, abash'd, controll'd,
Mix with the gods, and fill their seats of gold.
And now the Thunderer meditates his flight
From Ida's summits to the Olympian height,
Swifter than thought the wheels instinctive fly,
Flame through the vast of air, and reach the sky.

'T was Neptune's charge his coursers to unbrace,
And fix the car on its immortal base;
There stood the chariot, beaming forth its rays,
Till with a snowy veil he screen'd the blaze.
He, whose all-conscious eyes the world behold,
The eternal Thunderer sat enthron'd in gold,
High heaven the footstool of his feet he makes,
And wide beneath him all Olympus shakes.
Trembling afar the offending powers appear'd,
Confused and silent, for his frown they fear'd.
He saw their soul, and thus his word imparts:
Pallas and Juno! say, why heave your hearts?
Soon was your battle o'er: proud Troy retired
Before your face, and in your wrath expired.
But know, whoe'er almighty power withstand!
Unmatch'd our force, unconquer'd is our hand:
Who shall the sovereign of the skies control?
Not all the gods that crown the starry pole.
Your hearts shall tremble, if our arms we take,
And each immortal nerve with horror shake.
For thus I speak, and what I speak shall stand;
What power soe'er provokes our lifted hand,
On this our hill no more shall hold his place,
Cut off, and exiled from the ethereal race.
Juno and Pallas grieving hear the doom,
But feast their souls on Ilion's woes to come.
Through secret anger swell'd Minerva's breast,
The prudent goddess yet her wrath repress'd:
But Juno, impotent of rage, replies:
What hast thou said, oh tyrant of the skies!

Strength and omnipotence invest thy throne:
'T is thine to punish; ours to grieve alone.
For Greece we grieve, abandon'd by her fate,
To drink the dregs of thy unmeasured hate:
From fields forbidden we submiss refrain,
With arms unaiding see our Argives slain;
Yet grant our counsels still their breasts may move,
Lest all should perish in the rage of Jove.
The goddess thus: and thus the god replies,
Who swells the clouds, and blackens all the skies:
The morning sun awaked by loud alarms,
Shall see the almighty Thunderer in arms,
What heaps of Argives then shall load the plain,
Those radiant eyes shall view, and view in vain.
Nor shall great Hector cease the rage of fight,
The navy flaming, and thy Greeks in flight,
E'en till the day, when certain fates ordain
That stern Achilles (his Patroclus slain)
Shall rise in vengeance, and lay waste the plain.
For such is fate, nor canst thou turn its course
With all thy rage, with all thy rebel force.
Fly, if thou wilt, to earth's remotest bound,
Where on her utmost verge the seas resound;
Where cursed Iäpetus and Saturn dwell,
Fast by the brink, within the steams of hell;
No sun e'er gilds the gloomy horrors there;
No cheerful gales refresh the lazy air;
There arm once more the bold Titanian band;
And arm in vain; for what I will, shall stand.
Now deep in ocean sunk the lamp of light,

And drew behind the cloudy veil of night:
The conquering Trojans mourn his beams decay'd;
The Greeks rejoicing bless the friendly shade.
The victors keep the field; and Hector calls
A martial council near the navy walls:
These to Scamander's bank apart he led,
Where thinly scatter'd lay the heaps of dead.
The assembled chiefs, descending on the ground,
Attend his order, and their prince surround.
A massy spear he bore of mighty strength,
Of full ten cubits was the lance's length;
The point was brass, refulgent to behold,
Fix'd to the wood with circling rings of gold;
The noble Hector on this lance reclined,
And bending forward, thus reveal'd his mind:
Ye valiant Trojans, with attention hear!
Ye Dardan bands, and generous aids, give ear!
This day, we hoped, would wrap in conquering flame
Greece with her ships, and crown our toils with fame.
But darkness now, to save the cowards, falls,
And guards them trembling in their wooden walls.
Obey the Night, and use her peaceful hours
Our steeds to forage, and refresh our powers.
Straight from the town be sheep and oxen sought,
And strengthening bread, and generous wine be brought;
Wide o'er the field, high blazing to the sky,
Let numerous fires the absent sun supply,
The flaming piles with plenteous fuel raise,
Till the bright morn her purple beam displays;

Lest, in the silence and the shades of night,
Greece in her sable ships attempt her flight,
Not unmolested let the wretches gain
Their lofty decks, or safely cleave the main;
Some hostile wound let every dart bestow,
Some lasting token of the Phrygian foe,
Wounds, that long hence may ask their spouses' care,
And warn their children from a Trojan war.
Now through the circuit of our Ilion wall,
Let sacred heralds sound the solemn call;
To bid the sires, with hoary honours crown'd,
And beardless youths, our battlements surround.
Firm be the guard, while distant lie our powers,
And let the matrons hang with lights the towers:
Lest, under covert of the midnight shade,
The insidious foe the naked town invade.
Suffice, to-night, these orders to obey:
A nobler charge shall rouse the dawning day.
The gods, I trust, shall give to Hector's hand,
From these detested foes to free the land,
Who plough'd, with fates averse, the watery way,
For Trojan vultures a predestined prey.
Our common safety must be now the care;
But soon as morning paints the fields of air,
Sheath'd in bright arms let every troop engage,
And the fired fleet behold the battle rage.
Then, then shall Hector and Tydides prove,
Whose fates are heaviest in the scale of Jove.
To-morrow's light (O haste the glorious morn!)
Shall see his bloody spoils in triumph borne;

With this keen javelin shall his breast be gored,
And prostrate heroes bleed around their lord.
Certain as this, oh! might my days endure,
From age inglorious, and black death secure;
So might my life and glory know no bound,
Like Pallas worshipp'd, like the sun renown'd!
As the next dawn, the last they shall enjoy,
Shall crush the Greeks, and end the woes of Troy.
The leader spoke. From all his host around
Shouts of applause along the shores resound.
Each from the yoke the smoking steeds untied,
And fix'd their head-stalls to his chariot-side.
Fat sheep and oxen from the town are led,
With generous wine, and all-sustaining bread.
Full hecatombs lay burning on the shore;
The winds to heaven the curling vapours bore.
Ungrateful offering to the immortal powers!
Whose wrath hung heavy o'er the Trojan towers;
Nor Priam nor his sons obtain'd their grace;
Proud Troy they hated, and her guilty race.
The troops exulting sat in order round,
And beaming fires illumined all the ground.
As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night!
O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light,
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole,
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with silver every mountain's head;

Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies:
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.
So many flames before proud Ilion blaze,
And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays:
The long reflections of the distant fires
Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires.
A thousand piles the dusky horrors gild,
And shoot a shady lustre o'er the field.
Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,
Whose number'd arms, by fits, thick flashes send.
Loud neigh the coursers o'er their heaps of corn,
And ardent warriors wait the rising morn.

VII. OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

1728–1774.

Once upon a time, a century and a half ago, on the banks of the river Inny there stood a gray, old, haunted house. Every night, so the country-folk said, a huge goblin climbed up to the roof and kicked away anything that was mended during the day. At last it fell entirely to pieces, and then all the fairies in the neighborhood met there at night and danced and reveled in the ruins. Before it fell quite down, however, a piece of great good luck came to it; for there was born in it, in the year of our Lord 1728, a little homely Irish baby, who grew to be a very famous and honored man.

You will not be surprised to hear that, among so many fairies, there were some to lay gifts in his cradle. Many different tales are told us about these fairies by Washington Irving, by Thackeray and others; but the one I like best to believe is that two came together, one good and one evil, to whisper fairy counsels into the little sleeping ear.

The first gave him a tender, generous, and loving heart, a quick and intelligent mind, and a beautiful gift of fancy and expression; she made him a poet. But the bad fairy left him a love of pleasure and a gift of laziness, with the power to be less just than he was generous. So through all his life he was either very happy or very wretched, having a lavish abundance or groaning under debt. He gave pleasure and help to many, but he died alone and sad.

He began life a poor, jolly, good-natured, shiftless little Irish boy, marked by the smallpox and homely in every way. Once, however, when he was only eight years old, he was dancing in the kitchen to the music of a fiddle, when the fiddler called him "little Æsop." In an instant the child replied, "Heralds, proclaim aloud this saying: 'See Æsop dancing and his monkey playing.'" So you see the good fairy gave him real Irish wit. He learned his letters from old Paddy Byrne, and grew to be seventeen years old, always full of capers and fun, "righteously doing as little work as he could, robbing orchards, playing ball, and making his pocket-money fly whenever fortune sent him any." His father was a poor Irish gentleman and clergyman, who could always raise a potato and a sixpence for a poorer friend. His uncle Contarine was more well-to-do, and when the boy began to show some of the good fairy's gifts, he sent him to Dublin to the university. Here he soon won a prize of thirty shillings. But the bad fairy's gift persuaded him to spend it in mischief, and he went home, after many pranks and adventures, to stay for two years, studying for the ministry. When he was ready to be ordained, he went to see the Bishop, wearing a pair of bright scarlet breeches, and was sent home in disgrace. By the aid of fairy number one, he then taught in a school for a year, and earned thirty pounds, when lo! fairy number two persuaded him to go off on a pleasure trip, and he came home penniless again, riding on an old nag, the last of all his possessions, which he called "Fiddleback." He managed to get money enough to study law, and then to spend it all before he got to London, whither he was bound; to get money enough to study medicine, and then, instead of going to work, to ramble over Europe "with a shirt, a shilling, and a flute," playing to the peasants, who gave him a night's lodging in return. But

the good fairy is gradually getting the upper hand. He comes back to London and begins to practice medicine in some shabby old fine clothes, holding his hat against his velvet coat to hide its patches. And now at length he discovers the greatest of his good gifts, — he begins to write, and the world begins to listen. He publishes a poem called "The Traveller," then a simple story that everybody reads and loves, "The Vicar of Wakefield," then another noble poem, one of the treasures of the English language. It is called "The Deserted Village," and describes, under the name of "sweet Auburn," the pretty village of Lissoy, where the author spent a part of his happy Irish boyhood. He writes many things, — a history of Rome, of England, and of France; a history of Animated Nature; a play called "The Good-Natured Man," and a very famous and charming comedy, "She Stoops to Conquer: or, The Mistakes of a Night." But all this time the bad fairy has been at work too. Some friends ask him to breakfast; he does n't come, and when they go to look for him he has ripped open his feather bed and lies in the feathers. He has pawned his clothes to help a beggar. But, meanwhile, he has not paid the tailor for the clothes! He earns money and fame by his writings, but he spends more than he earns, and so is never at ease. On the other hand, the good fairy has secured for him precious treasures, — his friends, Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds the great painter, Burke the great orator, Fox, and Gibbon the historian, and others like them. When he died, at forty-six, we are told that Burke burst into tears, and Reynolds could paint no more that day. But best of all I think it is to read that "the staircase outside his door in Brick Court was filled with poor, sorrowing people who had no friend but him they had come to weep for, — outcasts of that great, solitary, wicked city, to whom he had never for-

gotten to be kind and charitable." He never saw Ireland after he left it as a boy. But he loved Ireland to his dying day, and he has made her loved by the world of readers who know the "Vicar of Wakefield" and the "Deserted Village." As for himself, hear what the great Mr. Thackeray says of him: "The most beloved of English writers — what a title that is for a man!" And this title he ascribes to Oliver Goldsmith.

POEMS.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheer'd the laboring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delay'd:
Dear, lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endear'd each scene!
How often have I paused on every charm,
The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topt the neighboring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made!
How often have I blest the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labor free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree;
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old survey'd;

And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,
And slights of art and feats of strength went round;
And still as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown
By holding out to tire each other down;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter titter'd round the place;
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove:
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports, like these
With sweet succession, taught e'en toil to please;
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,
These were thy charms — but all these charms are fled.

Sweet, smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn!
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen
And desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain.
No more the grassy brook reflects the day,
But, choked with sedges, works its weedy way;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries:
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall;
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintain'd its man:
For him light Labor spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no more;
His best companions, innocence and health,
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.
But times are alter'd: trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain;
Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,
And every want to luxury allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that ask'd but little room,
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
Lived in each look, and brighten'd all the green, —
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here as I take my solitary rounds,
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined grounds,
And, many a year elapsed, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,

Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.
In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs — and God has given my share —
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose:
I still had hopes — for pride attends us still —
Amidst the swains to shew my book-learn'd skill,
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt and all I saw;
And as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return and die at home at last.
O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreat from cares, that never must be mine!
How blest is he who crowns in shades like these,
A youth of labor with an age of ease;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 't is hard to combat, learns to fly!
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep.
No surly porter stands in guilty state,
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending virtue's friend;
Sinks to the grave with unperceived decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way;

And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past.
Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close,
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;
There, as I past with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came soften'd from below;
The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,
The sober herd that low'd to meet their young;
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school;
The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind, —
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail;
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
But all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widow'd, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring;
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry fagot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.
Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden-flower grows wild,
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.

A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a-year:
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wish'd to change, his place;
Unskilful he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,
More bent to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train,
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain;
The long-remember'd beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away,
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learn'd to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe:
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.
Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings lean'd to virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt, for all;
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismay'd,
The reverend champion stood. At his control,
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whisper'd praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorn'd the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,
And fools who came to scoff, remain'd to pray.
The service past, around the pious man,
With ready zeal, each honest rustic ran;
E'en children follow'd, with endearing wile,
And pluck'd his gown, to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth express'd;
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distress'd;
To them his heart, his love, his griefs, were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven;
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon struggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossom'd furze, unprofitably gay,
There in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule,
The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view;
I knew him well, and every truant knew:
Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;

Full well they laugh'd, with counterfeited glee,
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd:
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault.
The village all declared how much he knew,
'T was certain he could write and cipher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And e'en the story ran — that he could gauge:
In arguing, too, the parson own'd his skill,
For e'en though vanquish'd, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thund'ring sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.
But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumph'd, is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,
Where graybeard mirth, and smiling toil, retired,
Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlor splendors of that festive place:
The white-wash'd wall, the nicely-sanded floor,
The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door;
The chest, contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;

The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose;
The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,
With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay;
While broken tea cups, wisely kept for show,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row.

Vain, transitory splendors! Could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart:
Thither no more the peasant shall repair,
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his pond'rous strength, and lean to hear;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art.
Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined:
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd, —

In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And, e'en while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart, distrusting, asks if this be joy?

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'T is yours to judge how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;
Hoards, e'en beyond the miser's wish, abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains: this wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss: the man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds:
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth,
Has robb'd the neighboring fields of half their growth;
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies: —
While thus the land, adorn'd for pleasure all,
In barren splendor feebly waits its fall.

As some fair female, unadorn'd and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slights every borrow'd charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes;

But when those charms are past — for charms are frail —
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress:
Thus fares the land, by luxury betray'd;
In nature's simplest charms at first array'd:
But verging to decline, its splendors rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;
While, scourged by famine from the smiling land,
The mournful peasant leads his humble band;
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms — a garden and a grave.

Where, then, ah! where shall poverty reside,
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd,
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And e'en the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped, what waits him there?
To see profusion that he must not share;
To see ten thousand baneful arts combined
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;
To see each joy the sons of pleasure know
Extorted from his fellow-creatures' woe.
Here while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies his sickly trade;
Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
The dome where Pleasure holds her midnight reign,
Here, richly deck'd, admits the gorgeous train;

Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
Sure these denote one universal joy!
Are these thy serious thoughts? — Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies:
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distrest:
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn:
Now lost to all — her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel, and robes of country brown.
Do thine, sweet Auburn, thine, the loveliest train,
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
E'en now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread!
Ah, no. To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex-world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charm'd before,
The various terrors of that horrid shore;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day;
Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,

But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crown'd,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
And savage men, more murd'rous still than they;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day
That call'd them from their native walks away;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round the bowers, and fondly look'd their last,
And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main;
And shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep!
The good old sire the first prepared to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave:
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for her father's arms:

With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And blest the cot where every pleasure rose,
And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear,
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.

O luxury! thou curst by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchanged are things like these for thee!
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigor not their own:
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
Till, sapp'd their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

E'en now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done;
E'en now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land.
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail
That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
Downward they move a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness, are there;
And piety with wishes placed above,
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade;

Unfit, in these degenerate times of shame,
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame;
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;
Thou guide, by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!
Farewell; and oh! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
Whether where equinoctial fervors glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigors of th' inclement clime;
Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain;
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him, that states of native strength possest,
Though very poor, may still be very blest;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labor'd mole away;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

From

RETALIATION.

Here lies David Garrick, describe him who can,
An abridgment of all that was pleasant in man;

As an actor, confess'd without rival to shine,
As a wit, if not first, in the very first line:
Yet, with talents like these, and an excellent heart,
The man had his failings, a dupe to his art.
Like an ill-judging beauty, his colors he spread,
And beplaster'd with rouge his own natural red.
On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting;
'T was only that when he was off he was acting.
With no reason on earth to go out of his way,
He turn'd and he varied full ten times a day:
Though secure of our hearts, yet confoundedly sick
If they were not his own by finessing and trick:
He cast off his friends, as a huntsman his pack,
For he knew when he pleased he could whistle them back;
Of praise a mere glutton, he swallow'd what came,
And the puff of a dunce he mistook it for fame;
Till his relish, grown callous almost to disease,
Who pepper'd the highest was surest to please.
But let us be candid, and speak out our mind,
If dunces applauded, he paid them in kind.

* * * *

Here Reynolds is laid, and, to tell you my mind,
He has not left a wiser or better behind;
His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand,
His manners were gentle, complying, and bland:
Still born to improve us in every part,
His pencil our faces, his manners our heart.
To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,
When they judged without skill, he was still hard of hearing:

When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff,
He shifted his trumpet, and only took snuff.

From

THE TRAVELLER.

Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow,
Or by the lazy Scheldt, or wandering Po,
Or onward, where the rude Carinthian boor
Against the houseless stranger shuts the door;
Or where Campania's plain forsaken lies,
A weary waste expanding to the skies:
Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
My heart untravell'd fondly turns to thee;
Still to my brother turns, with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain.
Eternal blessings crown my earliest friend,
And round his dwelling guardian saints attend!
Blest be that spot, where cheerful guests retire
To pause from toil, and trim their evening fire!
Blest that abode, where want and pain repair,
And every stranger finds a ready chair!
Blest be those feasts with simple plenty crown'd,
Where all the ruddy family around
Laugh at the jests or pranks that never fail,
Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale;
Or press the bashful stranger to his food,
And learn the luxury of doing good!

But me, not destined such delights to share,
My prime of life in wandering spent, and care;
Impell'd, with steps unceasing, to pursue
Some fleeting good, that mocks me with the view
That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,
Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies:
My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,
And find no spot of all the world my own.
E'en now, where Alpine solitudes ascend,
I sit me down a pensive hour to spend;
And, placed on high above the storm's career,
Look downward where a hundred realms appear;
Lakes, forests, cities, plains extending wide,
The pomp of kings, the shepherd's humbler pride.
When thus Creation's charms around combine,
Amidst the store should thankless pride repine?
Say, should the philosophic mind disdain
That good which makes each humbler bosom vain?
Let school-taught pride dissemble all it can,
These little things are great to little man;
And wiser he, whose sympathetic mind
Exults in all the good of all mankind.
Ye glittering towns, with wealth and splendor crown'd;
Ye fields, where summer spreads profusion round;
Ye lakes, whose vessels catch the busy gale;
Ye bending swains, that dress the flowery vale;
For me your tributary stores combine,
Creation's heir, the world — the world is mine!

VIII. ROBERT BURNS.

1759–1796.

In a long, low farmhouse, the farmhouse of Lochlea, on the banks of the Ayr, an old Scotch peasant lay dying. After a look across his poor and barren fields, over the Carrick hills and westward to the sea, he looked back upon the group about him, his faithful wife Agnes, his daughters and his sons, and said sadly that for one of his children he feared — he feared. "Oh, father," one of the boys said, coming up to the bedside, "is it me you 're meaning?" and when he heard the "Ay, it is," he turned away in a burst of tears and sorrowful foreboding. The old peasant was William Burns, who saw the powerful genius and the weak will of his eldest boy, and feared for him. This lad of twenty-three, tall and strong, though stooping from too early and too hard work, with his dark curls tied behind, and with glowing, flashing dark eyes, was

"Robin the Rhymer,"
"The Chief Singer of Scottish Song,"
"The National Poet of Scotland,"
"The Purifier of Scottish Verse,"
"The Bard of Caledonia,"
"The Pride of Scotia's Favored Plains,"
"The First of Song-writers,"
"The Ayrshire Plowman," Robert Burns.

"An auld clay biggin," near the Brig o' Doon and Alloway Kirk, built by his father's own hands, was the boy's first

home. The barren farms of Mount Oliphant, Lochlea, and Mossgiel, were the next that he knew. For years he had hard work and scanty food. He and his brother, Gilbert, went bareheaded and barefooted, driving the plough, working in the garden, carting coal, and doing the chief labor of the farm. But the whole family had a thirst for knowledge. "At meal-times they sat, a spoon in one hand and a book in the other," and fairly drank in learning. A schoolmaster, hired by some of the hard-won shillings, taught them to read, and then they borrowed books, — the "Life of Hannibal" from the teacher, and the "Life of Sir William Wallace" from the blacksmith; later some plays of Shakespeare; Pope, and an odd copy of the "Spectator." Their mother, the "thrifty, guid wifie," had a sweet voice, and as she moved about her work she sang the old Scotch songs and ballads. Old Jenny, too, lived in the family, and had "the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, giants, enchanted towers," and the like. Robert listened to them in the ingleside, and then hummed and sang them over at the plough.

When he was fifteen he worked in the harvest-field with "a bonny, sweet, sonsy lass," and thought to himself that he could sing her a song of his own. So he began, "Oh, once I loved a bonnie lass," — the first of the hundreds of songs now known and sung all around the world. Burns would sing and repeat his songs and poems to Gilbert as they worked at the plough. Then he would copy them and put them into a drawer in a little deal table in the attic, where the brothers slept together. There the songs lay and accumulated while Burns grew, going to a dancing-school "to give his manners a brush"; going to the coast town of Irvine to learn flax-dressing, and coming back to the old, hard farm

life. At length he fell in love with bonny Jean Armour, and married her privately; but misfortunes came thick upon him. He had no money, and in Irvine he had learned a bad lesson, — the lesson of drinking and carousing and jolly good fellowship. He determined to go to Jamaica, and bethought himself to publish the poetry in the deal-table drawer to get money for the voyage. A printer in Kilmarnock got out the little volume which gave to Scotland "The Cotter's Saturday Night," "Address to the Deil," "The Mountain Daisy," "The Twa Dogs," and the early songs. Twenty pounds came to Burns from the publisher; he took a steerage passage for Jamaica, and had just written his sad farewell song, "The Gloomy Night is Gathering Fast," when a letter came from the famous Dr. Blacklock. The world of Edinburgh had seen the modest Kilmarnock volume; the writer was a genius, he must come and make himself known. So away went the plough-boy to be welcomed and fêted and honored by great people in society and in letters. But his brief day of glory was soon over. He could not resist the bad habits of his Irvine days, and when in the next year he went again to Edinburgh, he had a cold reception, and came away for the last time bitter and sad at heart.

He had hoped that his fine friends would give him some practical help, — an office or a pension, — but his hope was disappointed. He took another farm at Ellisland, and there, with his bonny Jean and his bairns, lived for a few of his best years, writing or paraphrasing many songs for the collection by Thompson, which Burns made famous. Then he was made an exciseman and moved into the little town of Dumfries; was hail-fellow-well-met with all the boon companions of the place; would drink and sing his merry songs at night, and by day suffer miseries of remorse, until at last on one unhappy night he sat down and fell asleep in the

street, awoke with rheumatic fever, and died in the July of 1796.

The story of Burns, "whose short life was spent in toil and penury, and who died in the prime of manhood miserable and neglected," is a sad one, but it has a bright side, for his best ambition was gratified. The wish he made as a boy that he

> "For puir auld Scotland's sake
> Some useful plan or book could make,
> Or sing a sang at least,"

was fulfilled. He made the book; it made England proud of Scotland. He sang the song, and in it struck the first clear notes in the new yet old music of English poetry,—the poetry of Nature and Truth, which was to take the place of the poetry of form and manner, like that of Pope and Dryden.

Burns breathed in the spirit of the French Revolution, and then he wrote the great song of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," "A Man's a Man for a' That." He loved Scotland and the splendid story of her patriotism, and wrote her national song, "Scots wha ha'e." He studied the life of a simple, God-fearing Scotch peasant, and wrote "The Cotter's Saturday Night." He loved Scotch scenery, and wrote a hundred songs which, like "Sweet Afton," and the "Banks and Braes o' Bonny Doon," and "Gala Water," have made the charms of this scenery known around the world. Burns had a little sister, Annabella, who never learned to write, because, her father said, "the lassies did na' need to ken so much"; but she, too, had the music in her heart, and used to get one of her father's farm laborers privately to write down her "sangs." If she had had the chance, she might have immortalized the Scotch lassies; but her brother did it for

her, and all the world knows "Bonny Lesley" and "Highland Mary" and "Lovely Young Jessie," and a score of others. Burns loved old tradition, fun, and humor, and wrote "Tam o' Shanter," the embodiment of them all, composed in one day as he wandered by the banks of the river Nith, where he was found reciting it aloud, with tears rolling down his cheeks.

Stirring songs of loyalty and patriotism; gay songs of jollity and pleasure, tender songs of affection, thrilling songs of love, — these are what Burns gave to the world in his thirty-seven years of life. It is with these in mind that Thomas Carlyle, the son of another Scotch peasant, himself another boast of English literature, calls him "a true poet — the most precious gift that can be bestowed upon a generation."

POEMS.

TO A MOUSE,

ON TURNING UP HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH.

Wee, sleeket, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,
Oh, what a panic 's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin and chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

I 'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken nature's social union,
And justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earthborn companion,
And fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen icker in a thrave
's a sma' request:
I 'll get a blessin' wi' the laive,
And never miss 't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin' !
And naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green
And bleak December's winds ensuin',
Baith snell and keen !

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,
And weary winter comin' fast,
And cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till, crash ! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves and stibble,
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble !
Now thou 's turn'd out for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
And cranreuch cauld !

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain :
The best laid schemes o' mice and men,
Gang aft a-gley,
And lea'e us nought but grief and pain,
For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me !
The present only toucheth thee :

But, och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear!
And forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess and fear.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

GRAY.

MY loved, my honour'd, much respected friend,
No mercenary bard his homage pays:
With honest pride I scorn each selfish end:
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise;
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aitken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sough;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose:
The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,

Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant wee things toddlin, stacher thro'
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin' noise and glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnily,
His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie wifie's smile.
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labour and his toil.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drappin' in,
At service out amang the farmers roun',
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neibor town;
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparklin' in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to show a bra' new gown,
Or deposit her sair-won penny fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

Wi' joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
And each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears;
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view,

The mother, wi' her needle and her shears,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel 's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's and their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warned to obey;
And mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
And ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play;
"And oh! be sure to fear the Lord alway!
And mind your duty, duly, morn and night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!"

But, hark! a rap comes gently to the door,
Jenny wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neibor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek,
Wi' heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd the mother hears it 's nae wild worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
A strappin' youth; he taks the mither's eye;
Blithe Jenny sees the visit 's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.

The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate and laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave;
Weel pleas'd to think her bairn 's respected like the lave.

Oh happy love! — where love like this is found!
Oh heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I 've paced much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare —
If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'T is when a youthful, loving, modest pair
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale.

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth! —
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild?

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halesome parritch, chief of Scotia's food;

The soupe their only hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood:
The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell,
And aft he 's prest, and aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 't was a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, with patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-bible, ance his father's pride;
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And "Let us worship GOD!" he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
Perhaps Dundee's wild warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy o' the name,
Or noble Elgin beets the heaven-ward flame,
The sweetest far o' Scotia's holy lays:
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickl'd ears no heart-felt raptures raise
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page —
How Abram was the friend of God on high;

Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme —
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in Heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head;
How His first followers and servants sped,
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced by Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down to Heaven's eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art,

When men display to congregations wide,
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart!
The pow'r, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But, haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleas'd, the language of the soul;
And in His book of life the inmates poor enrol.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He, who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way his wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But, chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man 's the noblest work of God!"
And certes, in fair virtue's heav'nly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind.
What is a lordling's pomp? — a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd!

Oh Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!

Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And oh! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd isle.

Oh Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide
That stream'd through Wallace's undaunted heart,
Who dar'd to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
(The patriot's God, peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
Oh never, never, Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

FOR A' THAT, AND A' THAT.

Is there, for honest poverty,
That hangs his head, and a' that?
The coward slave we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Our toil 's obscure, and a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that.

What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hodden grey, and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man 's a man for a' that;
For a' that, and a' that,
Their tinsel show, and a' that;
The honest man, though e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He 's but a coof for a' that:
For a' that, and a' that,
His riband, star, and a' that,
The man of independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that:
But an honest man 's aboon his might,
Guid faith he maunna fa' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher ranks than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that,
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree, and a' that.

For a' that, and a' that,
It 's coming yet, for a' that,
That man to man, the warld o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.

BRUCE'S ADDRESS.

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victorie!

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lower;
See approach proud Edward's power —
Chains and slavery!

Wha will be a traitor knave,
Wha can fill a coward's grave,
Wha sae base as be a slave,
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or Freeman fa',
Let him follow me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty 's in every blow! —
Let us do, or die!

AULD LANG SYNE.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne?

Chorus.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We 'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans fine;
But we 've wandered mony a weary foot,
Sin auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn,
Frae mornin' sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd,
Sin auld lang syne.

And here 's a hand, my trusty fiere,
And gie 's a hand o' thine;

And we 'll tak a right guid willie-waught,
For auld lang syne.

And surely ye 'll be your pint stoup,
And surely I 'll be mine;
And we 'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

MY HEART 'S IN THE HIGHLANDS.

My heart 's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart 's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe —
My heart 's in the Highlands wherever I go.

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birth-place of valour, the country of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

Farewell to the mountains high covered with snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below:
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.

My heart 's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart 's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer:
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe —
My heart 's in the Highlands wherever I go.

AE FOND KISS.

Ae fond kiss and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I 'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I 'll wage thee.
Who shall say that fortune grieves him,
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me.

I 'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy.
But to see her was to love her;
Love but her, and love for ever.
Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met — or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure!
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas! for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I 'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I 'll wage thee!

BANNOCKS O' BARLEY.

Bannocks o' bear meal,
Bannocks o' barley;
Here 's to the Highlandman's
Bannocks o' barley.
Wha in a brulzie
Will first cry a parley?
Never the lads wi'
The bannocks o' barley!

Bannocks o' bear meal,
Bannocks o' barley;
Here 's to the lads wi'
The bannocks o' barley!
Wha in his wae-days
Were loyal to Charlie? —
Wha but the lads wi'
The bannocks o' barley?

COME BOAT ME O'ER TO CHARLIE.

Come boat me o'er, come row me o'er,
Come boat me o'er to Charlie;
I 'll gie John Ross another bawbee,
To boat me o'er to Charlie.

We 'll o'er the water and o'er the sea,
We 'll o'er the water to Charlie;

Come weal, come woe, we 'll gather and go
And live or die wi' Charlie.

I loe weel my Charlie's name
Tho' some there be abhor him:
But oh, to see auld Nick gaun hame,
And Charlie's faes before him!

I swear and vow by moon and stars,
And sun that shines so early,
If I had twenty thousand lives,
I 'd die as aft for Charlie.

THE GLOOMY NIGHT IS GATHERING FAST.

The gloomy night is gath'ring fast,
Loud roars the wild inconstant blast;
Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,
I see it driving o'er the plain;
The hunter now has left the moor,
The scatter'd coveys meet secure;
While here I wander, prest with care,
Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

The autumn mourns her rip'ning corn,
By early winter's ravage torn;
Across her placid, azure sky,
She sees the scowling tempest fly:

Chill runs my blood to hear it rave —
I think upon the stormy wave,
Where many a danger I must dare,
Far from the bonnie banks of Ayr.

'T is not the surging billow's roar,
'T is not that fatal deadly shore;
Tho' death in every shape appear,
The wretched have no more to fear!
But round my heart the ties are bound,
That heart transpierc'd with many a wound,
These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,
To leave the bonny banks of Ayr.

Farewell old Coila's hills and dales,
Her heathy moors and winding vales;
The scenes where wretched fancy roves,
Pursuing past, unhappy loves!
Farewell, my friends! farewell, my foes!
My peace with these, my love with those —
The bursting tears my heart declare;
Farewell the bonnie banks of Ayr!

THE BANKS O' DOON.

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair;
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary, fu' o' care?

Thou 'lt break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wanton'st thro' the flowering thorn:
Thou minds'st me o' departed joys,
Departed — never to return!

Aft hae I roved by bonnie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And fondly sae did I o' mine.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;
And my fause luver stole my rose,
But, ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

THE BIRKS OF ABERFELDY.

Now simmer blinks on flowry braes,
And o'er the crystal streamlet plays;
Come, let us spend the lightsome days
In the birks of Aberfeldy.

The little birdies blythely sing,
While o'er their heads the hazels hing,
Or lightly flit on wanton wing
In the birks of Aberfeldy.

The braes ascend, like lofty wa's,
The foamy stream deep-roaring fa's,

O'erhung wi' fragrant spreading shaws,
The birks of Aberfeldy.

The hoary cliffs are crown'd wi' flowers,
White o'er the linns the burnie pours,
And rising, weets wi' misty showers
The birks of Aberfeldy.

Let fortune's gifts at random flee,
They ne'er shall draw a wish frae me
Supremely blest wi' love and thee,
In the birks of Aberfeldy.

Chorus.

Bonnie lassie, will ye go,
Will ye go, will ye go;
Bonnie lassie, will ye go,
To the birks of Aberfeldy?

HIGHLAND MARY.

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!
There simmer first unfauld her robes,
And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloomed the gay green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade,
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours, on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder;
But oh! fell death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green 's the sod, and cauld 's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

Oh pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly!
And clos'd for aye the sparkling glance
That dwelt on me sae kindly;
And mouldering now in silent dust
That heart that loe'd me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

A RED, RED ROSE.

Oh, my luve 's like a red, red rose
That 's newly sprung in June:
Oh, my luve 's like the melodie,
That 's sweetly play'd in tune.
As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I:
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.
And fare thee weel, my only luve!
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again my luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

FLOW GENTLY, SWEET AFTON.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I 'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary 's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds thro' the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,

Thou green-crested lapwing thy screaming forbear,
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills,
Far mark'd with the courses of clear winding rills:
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below;
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow;
There oft as mild evening weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides;
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As gathering sweet flow'rets she stems thy clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays;
My Mary 's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

JOHN ANDERSON.

John Anderson my jo, John,
When we first acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonnie brow was brent;

But now your brow is bald, John,
Your locks are like the snow;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson my jo.

John Anderson my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither,
And mony a canty day, John,
We 've had wi' ane anither:
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we 'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson my jo.

OH, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST.

Oh, wert thou in the cauld blast
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I 'd shelter thee, I 'd shelter thee:
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a Paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there:

Or were I monarch o' the globe,
  Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
  Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

IX. WALTER SCOTT.

1771–1832.

In a garden by the banks of the Tweed, where its clear waters ripple over a bed of white, shining pebbles, stands an old sundial, around whose stone column is cut the inscription NYΞ ΓAP EPXETAI — "For the night cometh." "I must home, to 'work while it is called to-day, for *the night cometh* when no man can work'; I put that text many years ago on my dial-stone," said its owner, and no man ever chose a more characteristic inscription. Let any one who cares to see the fruits of immense talent joined to unbounded industry, and to make friends with the best-known and best-loved of Scotchmen, stand beside this dial and look about. Before him rises the gray, Gothic pile of the mansion of Abbotsford, built where in bygone years the abbots and monks of Melrose rode their fat mules in safety along the Tweed-side and forded its swift waters. Behind it are the Selkirk hills, and on every hand fine trees planted by the man who loved it and said of it in his journal: "My heart clings to the place I have created; there is scarce a tree on it that does not owe its being to me." This journal has recently been published entire for the first time since its closing words were written more than sixty years ago — the journal of

"The Great Unknown,"
"The Wizard of the North,"
"The Great Enchanter,"

"The Mighty Magician,"
"The Delight of Generous Boys,"
"The Pride of all Scotchmen" — Sir Walter Scott.

We learn from it that the wizard found his wand and the magician his magic in the word of the dial-stone — work, work, work! A little, delicate child, sent to live on a farm, spending his day with the shepherd lads and his evenings in listening to the ballads and tales of the country-side; a boy at the high school in Edinburgh, climbing Arthur's Seat in the afternoons with his favorite Bishop Percy's collection of ballads under his arm; beginning at sixteen to study law with his father, and going for seven successive years in his holiday to tramp about the neighboring hills and dales and study their folklore at first hand; with a giant memory and giant endurance; lame always, but stalwart, big, burly, and generous; loved by most men and all animals, — Scott came to be thirty-three years old. He was married to a young French girl, and lived in the pretty country house of Ashestiel, was "sheriff-depute" of Selkirk and clerk of the session, and known only as an honorable Scotch gentleman. Then in 1804 he published his "Border Minstrelsy," which made him widely known as a scholar, a critic, and an antiquarian. Three years later all Scotland was ringing with a story in verse — in spirited, easy, flowing verse, new in English poetry — called "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." The applause had not died away when it was followed by another and greater story, or metrical romance, as it was called, — the world-famous "Marmion"; and then came "The Lady of the Lake" to crown the fame of the new poet. Wealth and honors began to pour in upon him. He had a great ambition to found a family; or, rather, — for he was the descend-

ant of the good old Scotts of Harden, — to keep up a family name and honors. So he bought and laid out the domain and built the mansion of Abbotsford. Here he lived like a prince, his house filled with guests and his retainers many; getting up at five o'clock in the morning to make his slave of the lamp, his pen, do his magic work as he wrote "Don Roderick," "The Bridal of Triermain," the "Life of Dryden," and "The Lord of the Isles." Then his popularity began to wane. There was another new poet — Byron — to be worshiped, and Scott's star was no longer in the ascendant. Suddenly there appeared anonymously a novel, a Jacobite story of Scottish life and manners "Sixty Years Since." No one who could read, read or talked of anything but "Waverley." "My opinion of it," Lord Holland said, "why, man, none of us went to bed that night, and nothing but my gout slept!" No one knew, though many suspected, that "The Great Unknown" was the great Walter Scott. "The Antiquary," "The Heart of Midlothian," "Kenilworth," "Quentin Durward," "St. Ronan's Well," "Ivanhoe," "The Betrothed," "The Talisman," all the long and brilliant line of the Waverley Novels, twenty-three in number, appeared in fourteen years.

From 1814 to 1825 Scott was at the height of his career — the first baronet made by George the Fourth when he came to the throne, with a splendid fortune, a splendid fame, and with "honor, love, obedience, troops of friends." Among these friends were his printer, James Ballantyne, whom he had nicknamed "Aldiborontephoscophornio," and his publisher, John Ballantyne, or "Rigdum Funnidos." Unknown to any one, Scott had years before formed a partnership with first one brother and then the other, and had become involved with Constable, the London publisher. Suddenly there came a financial crash, and Scott found him-

self ruined, and in debt for a hundred and thirty thousand pounds. The "Journal" gives a pathetic account of his stunned and dazed feeling; his scorn at the idea of being declared a bankrupt; his brave and immediate resolution that no one should lose a penny by him. "I feel like the Eldon hills," he said, "quite firm, if a little cloudy. Something in my breast tells me my evil genius will not overwhelm me if I stand by myself. Well, exertion, exertion! O Invention, rouse thyself! May man be kind — may God be propitious. I must say to the Muse of Fiction: 'Go spin, you jade; go spin!' God help — no, God *bless* me! Every man must help himself." So the busy pen was driven more busily, and Scott mortgaged his imagination, his time, his life itself, to pay his debts of honor. In three years he wrote six novels, "The Tales of a Grandfather" and "The Life of Napoleon," and earned forty thousand pounds for his creditors. He had a stroke of paralysis, but toiled on again after it until at last flesh and blood gave way. He was taken to Italy by his daughter, but too late to help him, and he hastened home to Abbotsford to die, surrounded by his children, his much-loved son-in-law and biographer, John Lockhart, among them, and by his old and faithful domestics, whom no change of fortune could ever drive away from him, and who said, "Sir Walter always spoke to us as if we were blood relations." He had at the last a happy delusion that he had succeeded in paying all his debts, and, indeed, he did so, for in a few years afterward the entire amount was paid by the profits on his works.

The critics have been busy for half a century now, trying to decide whether Scott's poems, "with the quick, metrical tramp of his own moss-troopers," are great poems, and whether Scott's novels — those books which taught the

Scotch their own history and made Scotland interesting and lovely to the world, books which have cheered and delighted thousands upon thousands of readers — are great novels. It would be a sorry day for any boy who waited for their decision. Let him read "Marmion" and the "Lady of the Lake," and then "The Heart of Midlothian," "Quentin Durward," "Kenilworth," "Ivanhoe," and "The Talisman," and afterward the "Journal." He will not much care, then, to know if the critics finally decide that Scott is great, remembering that "Great names live in the world's respect; Scott's will live forever in its affection."

POEMS.

From

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

The Introduction.

The way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old;
His wither'd cheek, and tresses gray,
Seem'd to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the Bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry;
For, welladay! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead;
And he, neglected and oppress'd,
Wish'd to be with them, and at rest.
No more on prancing palfrey borne,
He caroll'd, light as lark at morn;
No longer courted and caress'd,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He pour'd, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay:

Old times were changed, old manners gone;
A stranger filled the Stuarts' throne;
The bigots of the iron time
Had call'd his harmless art a crime.
A wandering Harper, scorn'd and poor,
He begg'd his bread from door to door,
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp, a king had loved to hear.

He pass'd where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower:
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye —
No humbler resting-place was nigh,
With hesitating step at last,
The embattled portal arch he pass'd,
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar
Had oft roll'd back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door
Against the desolate and poor.
The Duchess marked his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell,
That they should tend the old man well:
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree;
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb!

When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,

Began to rise his minstrel pride:
And he began to talk anon,
Of good Earl Francis, dead and gone,
And of Earl Walter, rest him, God!
A braver ne'er to battle rode;
And how full many a tale he knew,
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch:
And, would the noble Duchess deign
To listen to an old man's strain,
Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak,
He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,
That, if she loved the harp to hear,
He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtain'd;
The Aged Minstrel audience gain'd.
But, when he reach'd the room of state,
Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
Perchance he wished his boon denied:
For, when to tune his harp he tried,
His trembling hand had lost the ease,
Which marks security to please;
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
Came wildering o'er his aged brain —
He tried to tune his harp in vain!
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
And gave him heart, and gave him time,
Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain

He could recall an ancient strain,
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls;
He had play'd it to King Charles the Good,
When he kept court in Holyrood;
And much he wish'd, yet fear'd to try
The long-forgotten melody.
Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face, and smiled;
And lighten'd up his faded eye,
With all a poet's ecstasy!
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along:
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot:
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied;
And, while his harp responsive rung,
'T was thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.

From

MARMION.

CANTO VI.

The Battle.

That night, upon the rocks and bay,
The midnight moon-beam slumbering lay,
And pour'd its silver light, and pure,
Through loop-hole, and through embrazure,
  Upon Tantallon tower and hall;
But chief where arched windows wide
Illuminate the chapel's pride,
  The sober glances fall.
Much was their need; though seam'd with scars,
Two veterans of the Douglas' wars,
  Though two grey priests were there,
And each a blazing torch held high,
You could not by their blaze descry
  The chapel's carving fair.
Amid that dim and smoky light,
Chequering the silver moon-shine bright,
  A bishop by the altar stood,
  A noble lord of Douglas blood,
With mitre sheen, and rocquet white.
Yet show'd his meek and thoughtful eye
But little pride of prelacy;
More pleased that, in a barbarous age,
He gave rude Scotland Virgil's page,

Than that beneath his rule he held
The bishopric of fair Dunkeld.
Beside him ancient Angus stood,
Doff'd his furr'd gown, and sable hood:
O'er his huge form and visage pale,
He wore a cap and shirt of mail;
And lean'd his large and wrinkled hand
Upon the huge and sweeping brand
Which wont of yore, in battle fray,
His foeman's limbs to shred away,
As wood-knife lops the sapling spray.
He seem'd as, from the tombs around
Rising at judgment-day,
Some giant Douglas may be found
In all his old array;
So pale his face, so huge his limb,
So old his arms, his look so grim.

Then at the altar Wilton kneels,
And Clare the spurs bound on his heels;
And think what next he must have felt,
At buckling of the falchion belt!
And judge how Clara changed her hue,
While fastening to her lover's side
A friend, which, though in danger tried,
He once had found untrue!
Then Douglas struck him with his blade:
"Saint Michael and Saint Andrew aid,
I dub thee knight.
Arise, Sir Ralph, De Wilton's heir!

For King, for Church, for Lady fair,
  See that thou fight." —
And Bishop Gawain, as he rose,
Said — "Wilton ! grieve not for thy woes,
  Disgrace, and trouble:
For He, who honour best bestows,
  May give thee double."
De Wilton sobb'd, for sob he must —
"Where'er I meet a Douglas, trust
  That Douglas is my brother !" —
"Nay, nay," old Angus said, "not so;
To Surrey's camp thou now must go,
  Thy wrongs no longer smother.
I have two sons in yonder field;
And, if thou meet'st them under shield,
Upon them bravely — do thy worst;
And foul fall him that blenches first !"

Not far advanced was morning day,
When Marmion did his troop array
  To Surrey's camp to ride;
He had safe conduct for his band,
Beneath the royal seal and hand,
  And Douglas gave a guide:
The ancient Earl, with stately grace,
Would Clara on her palfrey place,
And whisper'd in an under tone,
"Let the hawk stoop, his prey is flown." —
The train from out the castle drew,
But Marmion stopp'd to bid adieu: —

"Though something I might plain," he said,
"Of cold respect to stranger guest,
Sent hither by your King's behest,
While in Tantallon's towers I staid;
Part we in friendship from your land,
And, noble Earl, receive my hand." —
But Douglas round him drew his cloak,
Folded his arms, and thus he spoke: —
"My manors, halls, and bowers, shall still
Be open, at my Sovereign's will,
To each one whom he lists, howe'er
Unmeet to be the owner's peer.
My castles are my King's alone,
From turret to foundation-stone;
The hand of Douglas is his own,
And never shall in friendly grasp
The hand of such as Marmion clasp."—

Burn'd Marmion's swarthy cheek like fire,
And shook his very frame for ire,
And — "This to me!" he said, —
"An 't were not for thy hoary beard,
Such hand as Marmion's had not spared
To cleave the Douglas' head!
And, first, I tell thee, haughty Peer,
He, who does England's message here,
Although the meanest in her state,
May well, proud Angus, be thy mate:
And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,
Even in thy pitch of pride,

Here in thy hold, thy vassals near,
(Nay, never look upon your lord,
And lay your hands upon your sword,)
I tell thee, thou 'rt defied!
And if thou said'st I am not peer
To any lord in Scotland here,
Lowland or Highland, far or near,
Lord Angus, thou hast lied!"
On the Earl's cheek the flush of rage
O'ercame the ashen hue of age:
Fierce he broke forth,—"And darest thou, then,
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall?
And hopest thou hence unscathed to go?—
No, by Saint Bride of Bothwell, no!
Up drawbridge, grooms—what, Warder, ho!
Let the portcullis fall!"
Lord Marmion turn'd,—well was his need,
And dash'd the rowels in his steed,
Like arrow through the archway sprung,
The ponderous grate behind him rung:
To pass there was such scanty room,
The bars, descending, razed his plume.

The steed along the drawbridge flies,
Just as it trembled on the rise;
Nor lighter does the swallow skim
Along the smooth lake's level brim:
And when Lord Marmion reach'd his band,
He halts, and turns with clenched hand,

And shout of loud defiance pours,
And shook his gauntlet at the towers.

* * * *

Next morn the Baron climb'd the tower,
To view afar the Scottish power,
  Encamp'd on Flodden edge:
The white pavilions made a show,
Like remnants of the winter snow,
  Along the dusky ridge.
Long Marmion look'd:—at length his eye
Unusual movement might descry
  Amid the shifting lines:
The Scottish host drawn out appears,
For, flashing on the hedge of spears
  The eastern sunbeam shines.
Their front now deepening, now extending;
Their flank inclining, wheeling, bending,
Now drawing back, and now descending,
The skilful Marmion well could know,
They watch'd the motions of some foe,
Who traversed on the plain below.

Even so it was. From Flodden ridge
  The Scots beheld the English host
  Leave Barmore-wood, their evening post,
  And heedful watch'd them as they cross'd
The Till by Twisel Bridge.
  High sight it is, and haughty, while
  They dive into the deep defile;

Beneath the cavern'd cliff they fall,
Beneath the castle's airy wall.
By rock, by oak, by hawthorn-tree,
Troop after troop are disappearing;
Troop after troop their banners rearing,
Upon the eastern bank you see.
Still pouring down the rocky den,
Where flows the sullen Till,
And rising from the dim-wood glen,
Standards on standards, men on men,
In slow succession still,
And, sweeping o'er the Gothic arch,
And pressing on, in ceaseless march,
To gain the opposing hill.
That morn, to many a trumpet clang,
Twisel! thy rock's deep echo rang;
And many a chief of birth and rank,
Saint Helen! at thy fountain drank.
Thy hawthorn glade, which now we see
In spring-tide bloom so lavishly,
Had then from many an axe its doom,
To give the marching columns room.

And why stands Scotland idly now,
Dark Flodden! on thy airy brow,
Since England gains the pass the while,
And struggles through the deep defile?
What checks the fiery soul of James?
Why sits that champion of the dames
Inactive on his steed,

And sees, between him and his land,
Between him and Tweed's southern strand
His host Lord Surrey lead?
What 'vails the vain knight-errant's brand?
— O, Douglas, for thy leading wand!
Fierce Randolph, for thy speed!
O for one hour of Wallace wight,
Or well-skill'd Bruce, to rule the fight,
And cry — "Saint Andrew and our right!"
Another sight had seen that morn,
From Fate's dark book a leaf been torn,
And Flodden had been Bannockbourne! —
The precious hour has pass'd in vain,
And England's host has gain'd the plain;
Wheeling their march, and circling still,
Around the base of Flodden hill.

* * * *

With that, straight up the hill there rode
Two horsemen drench'd with gore,
And in their arms, a helpless load,
A wounded knight they bore.
His hand still strain'd the broken brand;
His arms were smear'd with blood and sand.
Dragg'd from among the horses' feet,
With dinted shield, and helmet beat,
The falcon-crest and plumage gone,
Can that be haughty Marmion! . . .
Young Blount his armour did unlace,
And, gazing on his ghastly face,

Said — "By Saint George, he 's gone!
That spear-wound has our master sped,
And see the deep cut on his head!
Good-night to Marmion."—
"Unnurtured Blount! thy brawling cease:
He opes his eyes," said Eustace; "peace!"

When, doff'd his casque, he felt free air,
Around 'gan Marmion wildly stare:—
"Where 's Harry Blount? Fitz-Eustace where?
Linger ye here, ye hearts of hare!
Redeem my pennon, — charge again!
Cry — 'Marmion to the rescue!'—Vain!
Last of my race, on battle-plain
That shout shall ne'er be heard again!—
Yet my last thought is England's — fly,
To Dacre bear my signet-ring:
Tell him his squadrons up to bring.—
Fitz-Eustace, to Lord Surrey hie;
Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
His life-blood stains the spotless shield:
Edmund is down:—my life is reft;
The Admiral alone is left.
Let Stanley charge with spur of fire,—
With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
Full upon Scotland's central host,
Or victory and England 's lost.—
Must I bid twice?—hence, varlets! fly!
Leave Marmion here alone—to die."
They parted, and alone he lay;

Clare drew her from the sight away,
Till pain wrung forth a lowly moan,
And half he murmur'd,—"Is there none,
Of all my halls have nurst,
Page, squire, or groom, one cup to bring
Of blessed water from the spring,
To slake my dying thirst!"

O, Woman! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!—
Scarce were the piteous accents said,
When, with the Baron's casque, the maid
To the nigh streamlet ran:
Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears;
The plaintive voice alone she hears,
Sees but the dying man.
She stoop'd her by the runnel's side,
But in abhorrence backward drew;
For, oozing from the mountain's side,
Where raged the war, a dark-red tide
Was curdling in the streamlet blue.
Where shall she turn?—behold her mark
A little fountain cell,
Where water, clear as diamond-spark
In a stone basin fell.
Above, some half-worn letters say,

Drink, weary pilgrim, drink and pray
For the kind soul of Sybil Grey,
Who built this cross and well.
She fill'd the helm, and back she hied,
And with surprise and joy espied
A monk supporting Marmion's head:
A pious man, whom duty brought
To dubious verge of battle fought,
To shrieve the dying, bless the dead.

Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
And, as she stoop'd his brow to lave—
"Is it the hand of Clare," he said,
"Or injured Constance, bathes my head?"
Then, as remembrance rose,—
"Speak not to me of shrift or prayer!
I must redress her woes.
Short space, few words, are mine to spare;
Forgive and listen, gentle Clare!"—
"Alas!" she said, "the while,—
O, think of your immortal weal!
In vain for Constance is your zeal;
She —— died at Holy Isle."—
Lord Marmion started from the ground,
As light as if he felt no wound;
Though in the action burst the tide,
In torrents, from his wounded side.
"Then it was truth," — he said — "I knew
That the dark presage must be true.—
I would the Fiend, to whom belongs

The vengeance due to all her wrongs,
  Would spare me but a day!
For wasting fire, and dying groan,
And priests slain on the altar-stone,
  Might bribe him for delay.
It may not be!—this dizzy trance—
Curse on yon base marauder's lance,
And doubly cursed my failing brand!
A sinful heart makes feeble hand."
Then, fainting, down on earth he sunk,
Supported by the trembling Monk.

With fruitless labour, Clara bound,
And strove to stanch the gushing wound:
The Monk, with unavailing cares,
Exhausted all the Church's prayers.
Ever, he said, that, close and near,
A lady's voice was in his ear,
And that the priest he could not hear,
  For that she ever sung,
"*In the lost battle, borne down by the flying,*
Where mingles war's rattle with groans of the dying!"
  So the notes rung;—
"Avoid thee, Fiend!—with cruel hand,
Shake not the dying sinner's sand!—
O, look, my son, upon yon sign
Of the Redeemer's grace divine;
  O, think on faith and bliss!—
By many a death-bed I have been,
And many a sinner's parting seen,

But never aught like this."—
The war, that for a space did fail,
Now trebly thundering swell'd the gale,
And—STANLEY! was the cry;
A light on Marmion's visage spread,
And fired his glazing eye;
With dying hand, above his head,
He shook the fragment of his blade,
And shouted "Victory!—
Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!"
Were the last words of Marmion.

By this, though deep the evening fell,
Still rose the battle's deadly swell,
For still the Scots, around their King,
Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
Where 's now their victor vaward wing,
Where Huntly, and where Home?—
O, for a blast of that dread horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
That to King Charles did come,
When Rowland brave, and Olivier,
And every paladin and peer,
On Roncesvalles died!
Such blast might warn them, not in vain,
To quit the plunder of the slain,
And turn the doubtful day again,
While yet on Flodden's side,
Afar, the Royal Standard flies,
And round it toils, and bleeds, and dies,

Our Caledonian pride!
In vain the wish—for far away,
While spoil and havock mark their way,
Near Sybil's Cross the plunderers stray.—
"O, Lady," cried the Monk, "away!"
And placed her on her steed,
And led her to the chapel fair,
Of Tillmouth upon Tweed.
There all the night they spent in prayer,
And at the dawn of morning, there
She met her kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.

But as they left the dark'ning heath,
More desperate grew the strife of death.
The English shafts in volleys hail'd,
In headlong charge their horse assail'd;
Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep
To break the Scottish circle deep,
That fought around their King.
But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
Though bill-men ply the ghastly blow,
Unbroken was the ring;
The stubborn spear-men still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell.
No thought was there of dastard flight;
Link'd in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,

As fearlessly and well;
Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded King.
Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
Led back from strife his shatter'd bands;
And from the charge they drew,
As mountain-waves, from wasted lands,
Sweep back to ocean blue.
Then did their loss his foemen know;
Their King, their Lords, their mightiest low,
They melted from the field as snow,
When streams are swoln and south winds blow,
Dissolves in silent dew.
Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless plash,
While many a broken band,
Disorder'd, through her currents dash,
To gain the Scottish land;
To town and tower, to down and dale,
To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
And raise the universal wail.
Tradition, legend, tune, and song,
Shall many an age that wail prolong:
Still from the sire the son shall hear
Of the stern strife, and carnage drear,
Of Flodden's fatal field,
Where shiver'd was fair Scotland's spear,
And broken was her shield!

Day dawns upon the mountain's side:—
There, Scotland! lay thy bravest pride,

Chiefs, knights, and nobles, many a one:
The sad survivors all are gone —
View not that corpse mistrustfully,
Defaced and mangled though it be;
Nor to yon Border Castle high,
Look northward with upbraiding eye;
  Nor cherish hope in vain,
That, journeying far on foreign strand,
The Royal Pilgrim to his land
  May yet return again.
He saw the wreck his rashness wrought;
Reckless of life, he desperate fought,
  And fell on Flodden plain;
And well in death his trusty brand,
Firm clench'd within his manly hand,
  Beseem'd the monarch slain.

From

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

CANTO I.

The Chase.

The western waves of ebbing day
Roll'd o'er the glen their level way;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,

Where twined the path in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splinter'd pinnacle;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
The rocky summits, split and rent,
Form'd turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seem'd fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever deck'd,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lack'd they many a banner fair;
For, from their shiver'd brows display'd,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dewdrops sheen,
The brier-rose fell in streamers green,
And creeping shrubs, of thousand dyes,
Waved in the west-wind's summer sighs.

Boon nature scatter'd, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child,
Here eglantine embalm'd the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there;
The primrose pale and violet flower,
Found in each cliff a narrow bower;
Fox-glove and night-shade, side by side,

Emblems of punishment and pride,
Group'd their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Grey birch and aspen wept beneath;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock;
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shatter'd trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seem'd the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrow'd sky.
Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
Where glist'ning streamers waved and danced,
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,
Affording scarce such breadth of brim,
As served the wild duck's brood to swim,
Lost for a space, through thickets veering,
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
Could on the dark-blue mirror trace;
And farther as the hunter stray'd,
Still broader sweeps its channels made.
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
Emerging from entangled wood,

But, wave-encircled, seem'd to float,
Like castle girdle with its moat;
Yet broader floods extending still
Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in an inland sea.

And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb, with footing nice,
A far projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid;
And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnish'd sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd,
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,
And mountains, that like giants stand,
To sentinel enchanted land.
High on the south, huge Benvenue
Down on the lake in masses threw
Crags, knolls and mounds, confusedly hurl'd,
The fragments of an earlier world;
A wildering forest feather'd o'er
His ruin'd sides and summit hoar,
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

From the steep promontory gazed
The stranger, raptured and amazed.
And, "What a scene were here," he cried,
"For princely pomp, or churchman's pride!
On this bold brow, a lordly tower;
In that soft vale, a lady's bower;
On yonder meadow, far away,
The turrets of a cloister grey;
How blithely might the bugle-horn
Chide, on the lake, the lingering morn!
How sweet, at eve, the lover's lute
Chime, when the groves were still and mute!
And, when the midnight moon should lave
Her forehead in the silver wave,
How solemn on the ear would come
The holy matin's distant hum,
While the deep peal's commanding tone
Should wake, in yonder islet lone,
A sainted hermit from his cell,
To drop a bead with every knell —
And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,
Should each bewilder'd stranger call
To friendly feast, and lighted hall.

"Blithe were it then to wander here!
But now, — beshrew yon nimble deer, —
Like that same hermit's, thin and spare,
The copse must give my evening fare;
Some mossy bank my couch must be,
Some rustling oak my canopy.

Yet pass we that; the war and chase
Give little choice of resting-place;—
A summer night, in greenwood spent,
Were but to-morrow's merriment:
But hosts may in these wilds abound,
Such as are better miss'd than found;
To meet with Highland plunderers here,
Were worse than loss of steed or deer.—
I am alone;—my bugle strain
May call some straggler of the train;
Or, fall the worst that may betide,
Ere now this falchion has been tried."

But scarce again his horn he wound,
When lo! forth starting at the sound,
From underneath an aged oak,
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay,
That round the promontory steep
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
Eddying in almost viewless wave,
The weeping willow-twig to lave,
And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
The beach of pebbles bright as snow.
The boat had touch'd this silver strand
Just as the Hunter left his stand,
And stood conceal'd amid the brake
To view this Lady of the Lake.
The maiden paused, as if again

She thought to catch the distant strain.
With head up-raised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,
And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art,
In listening mood, she seem'd to stand,
The guardian Naiad of the strand.

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
Of finer form, or lovelier face!
What though the sun, with ardent frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown, —
The sportive toil, which, short and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
Served too in hastier swell to show
Short glimpses of a breast of snow:
What though no rule of courtly grace
To measured mood had train'd her pace, —
A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dash'd the dew;
E'en the slight harebell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread:
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue, —
Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear,
The listener held his breath to hear!

A Chieftain's daughter seem'd the maid;
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,

Her golden brooch, such birth betray'd.
And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair,
Mantled a plaid with modest care,
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind.
Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;
Not Katrine, in her mirror blue,
Gives back the shaggy banks more true
Than every free-born glance confess'd
The guileless movements of her breast;
Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
Or woe or pity claim'd a sigh,
Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion pour'd a prayer,
Or tale of injury call'd forth
The indignant spirit of the North.
One only passion unreveal'd
With maiden pride the maid conceal'd,
Yet not less purely felt the flame;—
O need I tell that passion's name!

Impatient of the silent horn,
Now on the gale her voice was borne;—
"Father!" she cried; the rocks around
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.

Awhile she paused, no answer came, —
"Malcolm, was thine the blast?" the name
Less resolutely utter'd fell,
The echoes could not catch the swell.
"A stranger I," the Huntsman said,
Advancing from the hazel shade.
The maid, alarmed, with hasty oar,
Push'd her light shallop from the shore,
And when a space was gain'd between,
Closer she drew her bosom's screen;
(So forth the startled swan would swing,
So turn to prune his ruffled wing.)
Then safe, though flutter'd and amazed,
She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
Not his the form, nor his the eye
That youthful maidens wont to fly.

On his bold visage middle age
Had slightly press'd its signet sage,
Yet had not quench'd the open truth
And fiery vehemence of youth;
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare,
The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire,
Of hasty love, or headlong ire.
His limbs were cast in manly mould,
For hardy sports or contest bold;
And though in peaceful garb array'd,
And weaponless, except his blade,
His stately mien as well implied

A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a Baron's crest he wore
And sheathed in armour trode the shore.
Slighting the petty need he show'd,
He told of his benighted road;
His ready speech flow'd fair and free,
In phrase of gentlest courtesy;
Yet seem'd that tone and gesture bland
Less used to sue than to command.

A while the maid the stranger eyed,
And, reassured, at length replied
That Highland halls were open still
To wilder'd wanderers of the hill.
"Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone isle, our desert home;
Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pull'd for you
On yonder mountain's purple head
Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled,
And our broad nets have swept the mere,
To furnish forth your evening cheer."
"Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
Your courtesy has err'd," he said;
"No right have I to claim, misplaced,
The welcome of expected guest.
A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
My way, my friends, my courser lost,
I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
Have ever drawn your mountain air,

Till on this lake's romantic strand
I found a fay in fairy land!" —

"I well believe," the maid replied,
As her light skiff approach'd the side, —
"I well believe, that ne'er before
Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's shore;
But yet, as far as yesternight,
Old Allan-bane foretold your plight;
A grey-hair'd sire, whose eye intent
Was on the vision'd future bent.
He saw your steed, a dappled grey,
Lie dead beneath the birchen way;
Painted exact your form and mien,
Your hunting suit of Lincoln green,
That tassell'd horn so gaily gilt,
That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,
That cap with heron plumage trim,
And yon two hounds so dark and grim.
He bade that all should ready be,
To grace a guest of fair degree;
But light I held his prophecy,
And deem'd it was my father's horn
Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne."

The stranger smiled: — "Since to your home
A destined errant-knight I come,
Announced by prophet sooth and old,
Doom'd, doubtless, for achievement bold
I 'll lightly front each high emprise,

For one kind glance of those bright eyes.
Permit me, first, the task to guide
Your fairy frigate o'er the tide."
The maid, with smile suppress'd and sly,
The toil unwonted saw him try;
For seldom sure, if e'er before,
His noble hand had grasp'd an oar:
Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,
And o'er the lake the shallop flew;
With heads erect and whimpering cry
The hounds behind their passage ply.
Nor frequent does the bright oar break
The dark'ning mirror of the lake,
Until the rocky isle they reach,
And moor their shallop on the beach.

The stranger view'd the shore around,
'T was all so close with copsewood bound,
Nor track nor pathway might declare
That human foot frequented there,
Until the mountain-maiden show'd
A clambering unsuspected road,
That winded through the tangled screen
And open'd on a narrow green,
Where weeping birch and willow round
With their long fibres swept the ground.
Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.

It was a lodge of ample size,
But strange of structure and device;

Of such materials, as around
The workman's hand had readiest found.
Lopp'd off their boughs, their hoar trunks bared,
And by the hatchet rudely squared,
To give the walls their destined height,
The sturdy oak and ash unite;
While moss and clay and leaves combined
To fence each crevice from the wind.
The lighter pine-trees, over-head,
Their slender length for rafters spread,
And wither'd heath and rushes dry
Supplied a russet canopy.
Due westward, fronting to the green,
A rural portico was seen,
Aloft on native pillars borne,
Of mountain fir, with bark unshorn,
Where Ellen's hand had taught to twine
The ivy and Idæan vine,
The clematis, the favour'd flower
Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,
And every hardy plant could bear
Loch Katrine's keen and searching air.
An instant in this porch she staid,
And gaily to the stranger said,
"On heaven and on thy lady call,
And enter the enchanted hall!"

"My hope, my heaven, my trust must be,
My gentle guide, in following thee."
He cross'd the threshold — and a clang

Of angry steel that instant rang.
To his bold brow his spirit rush'd,
But soon for vain alarm he blush'd,
When on the floor he saw display'd,
Cause of the din, a naked blade
Dropp'd from the sheath, that careless flung
Upon a stag's huge antlers swung;
For all around, the walls to grace,
Hung trophies of the fight or chase:
A target there, a bugle here,
A battle-axe, a hunting-spear,
And broadswords, bows, and arrows store,
With the tusk'd trophies of the boar.
Here grins the wolf as when he died,
And there the wild-cat's brindled hide
The frontlet of the elk adorns,
Or mantles o'er the bison's horns;
Pennons and flags defaced and stain'd,
That blackening streaks of blood retain'd,
And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and white,
With otter's fur and seal's unite,
In rude and uncouth tapestry all,
To garnish forth the sylvan hall.

The wondering stranger round him gazed,
And next the fallen weapon raised:—
Few were the arms whose sinewy strength
Sufficed to stretch it forth at length,
And as the brand he poised and sway'd,
"I never knew but one," he said,

"Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
A blade like this in battle-field."
She sigh'd, then smiled and took the word:
"You see the guardian champion's sword:
As light it trembles in his hand,
As in my grasp a hazel wand;
My sire's tall form might grace the part
Of Ferragus or Ascabart;
But in the absent giant's hold
Are women now, and menials old."

The mistress of the mansion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame;
Whose easy step and stately port
Had well become a princely court,
To whom, though more than kindred knew,
Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
Meet welcome to her guest she made,
And every courteous rite was paid
That hospitality could claim,
Though all unask'd his birth and name.
Such then the reverence to a guest,
That fellest foe might join the feast,
And from his deadliest foeman's door
Unquestion'd turn, the banquet o'er.
At length his rank the stranger names,
"The Knight of Snowdoun, James Fitz-James;
Lord of a barren heritage,
Which his brave sires, from age to age,
By their good swords had held with toil;

His sire had fallen in such turmoil,
And he, God wot, was forced to stand
Oft for his right with blade in hand.
This morning, with Lord Moray's train,
He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
Outstripp'd his comrades, miss'd the deer,
Lost his good steed, and wander'd here."

Fain would the knight in turn require
The name and state of Ellen's sire.
Well show'd the elder lady's mien
That courts and cities she had seen;
Ellen, though more her looks display'd
The simple grace of sylvan maid,
In speech and gesture, form and face,
Show'd she was come of gentle race.
'T were strange, in ruder rank to find
Such looks, such manners, and such mind.
Each hint the Knight of Snowdoun gave
Dame Margaret heard with silence grave;
Or Ellen, innocently gay,
Turn'd all inquiry light away: —
"Weird women we! by dale and down
We dwell, afar from tower and town.
We stem the flood, we ride the blast,
On wandering knights our spells we cast;
While viewless minstrels touch the string,
'T is thus our charmed rhymes we sing."
She sung, and still a harp unseen
Fill'd up the symphony between.

SONG.

"Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more:
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

"No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armour's clang, or war-steed champing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here
Mustering clan, or squadron tramping,
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
At the day-break from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans, or squadrons stamping."

She paused — then, blushing, led the lay
To grace the stranger of the day.

Her mellow notes awhile prolong
The cadence of the flowing song,
Till to her lips in measured frame
The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

"Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye,
Here no bugles sound reveillé."

From

THE LORD OF THE ISLES.

CANTO VI.

It was a night of lovely June,
High rode in cloudless blue the moon,
Demayet smiled beneath her ray;
Old Stirling's towers arose in light,
And, twined in links of silver bright,
Her winding river lay.

Ah, gentle planet! other sight
Shall greet thee next returning night,
Of broken arms and banners tore,
And marshes dark with human gore,
And piles of slaughter'd men and horse,
And Forth that floats the frequent corse,
And many a wounded wretch to plain
Beneath thy silver light in vain!
But now, from England's host, the cry
Thou hear'st of wassail revelry,
While from the Scottish legions pass
The murmur'd prayer, the early mass!—
Here, numbers had presumption given;
There, bands o'er-match'd sought aid from Heaven.

On Gillie's hill, whose height commands
The battle-field, fair Edith stands,
With serf and page unfit for war,
To-eye the conflict from afar.
O! with what doubtful agony
She sees the dawning tint the sky!—
Now on the Ochils gleams the sun,
And glistens now Demayet dun;
Is it the lark that carols shrill?
Is it the bittern's early hum?
No!—distant, but increasing still,
The trumpet's sound swells up the hill,
With the deep murmur of the drum.
Responsive from the Scottish host,
Pipe-clang and bugle sound were toss'd,

His breast and brow each soldier cross'd,
And started from the ground;
Arm'd and array'd for instant fight,
Rose archer, spearman, squire and knight,
And in the pomp of battle bright
The dread battalia frown'd.

Now onward, and in open view,
The countless ranks of England drew,
Dark rolling like the ocean-tide,
When the rough west hath chafed his pride,
And his deep roar sends challenge wide
To all that bars his way!
In front the gallant archers trode,
The men-at-arms behind them rode,
And midmost of the phalanx broad
The Monarch held his sway.
Beside him many a war-horse fumes,
Around him waves a sea of plumes,
Where many a knight in battle known,
And some who spurs had first braced on,
And deem'd that fight should see them won,
King Edward's hests obey.
De Argentine attends his side,
With stout De Valence, Pembroke's pride,
Selected champions from the train,
To wait upon his bridle-rein.
Upon the Scottish foe he gazed —
At once, before his sight amazed,
Sunk banner, spear, and shield;

Each weapon-point is downward sent,
Each warrior to the ground is bent.
"The rebels, Argentine, repent!
For pardon they have kneel'd." —
"Aye! — but they bend to other powers,
And other pardon sue than ours!
See where yon bare-foot Abbot stands,
And blesses them with lifted hands!
Upon the spot where they have kneel'd,
These men will die or win the field." —
"Then prove we if they die or win!
Bid Gloster's Earl the fight begin."

Earl Gilbert waved his truncheon high,
Just as the Northern ranks arose,
Signal for England's archery
To halt and bend their bows.
Then stepp'd each yeoman forth a pace,
Glanced at the intervening space,
And raised his left hand high;
To the right ear the cords they bring —
At once ten thousand bow-strings ring,
Ten thousand arrows fly!
Nor paused on the devoted Scot
The ceaseless fury of their shot;
As fiercely and as fast
Forth whistling came the grey-goose wing
As the wild hailstones pelt and ring
Adown December's blast.
Nor mountain targe of tough bull-hide,

Nor lowland mail that storm may bide;
Woe, woe to Scotland's banner'd pride,
If the fell shower may last!
Upon the right, behind the wood,
Each by his steed dismounted, stood
The Scottish chivalry;—
With foot in stirrup, hand on mane,
Fierce Edward Bruce can scarce restrain
His own keen heart, his eager train,
Until the archers gained the plain;
Then, "Mount, ye gallants free!"
He cried; and, vaulting from the ground,
His saddle every horseman found.
On high their glittering crests they toss,
As springs the wild-fire from the moss;
The shield hangs down on every breast,
Each ready lance is in the rest,
And loud shouts Edward Bruce,—
"Forth, Marshal! on the peasant foe!
We 'll tame the terrors of their bow,
And cut the bow-string loose!"

Then spurs were dash'd in charger's flanks,
They rushed among the archer ranks.
No spears were there the shock to let,
No stakes to turn the charge were set,
And how shall yeoman's armour slight,
Stand the long lance and mace of might?
Or what may their short swords avail,
'Gainst barbed horse and shirt of mail?

Amid their ranks the chargers sprung,
High o'er their heads the weapons swung,
And shriek and groan and vengeful shout
Give note of triumph and of rout!
Awhile, with stubborn hardihood,
Their English hearts the strife made good.
Borne down at length on every side,
Compell'd to flight, they scatter wide. —
Let stags of Sherwood leap for glee,
And bound the deer of Dallon-Lee!
The broken bows of Bannock's shore
Shall in the greenwood ring no more!
Round Wakefield's merry May-pole now
The maids may twine the summer bough,
May northward look with longing glance,
For those that wont to lead the dance,
For the blithe archers look in vain!
Broken, dispersed, in flight o'erta'en,
Pierced through, trode down, by thousands slain,
They cumber Bannock's bloody plain.

The King with scorn beheld their flight.
"Are these," he said, "our yeomen wight?
Each braggart churl could boast before,
Twelve Scottish lives his baldric bore!
Fitter to plunder chase or park
Than make a manly foe their mark. —
Forward, each gentleman and knight!
Let gentle blood show generous might,
And chivalry redeem the fight!"

To rightward of the wild affray
The field show'd fair and level way;
  But, in mid-space, the Bruce's care
Had bored the ground with many a pit,
With turf and brushwood hidden yet,
  That form'd a ghastly snare.
Rushing, ten thousand horsemen came,
With spears in rest, and hearts on flame,
  That panted for the shock!
With blazing crests and banners spread,
And trumpet-clang and clamour dread,
The wide plain thunder'd to their tread,
  As far as Stirling rock.
Down! down! in headlong overthrow,
Horseman and horse, the foremost go,
  Wild floundering on the field!
The first are in destruction's gorge,
Their followers wildly o'er them urge: —
  The knightly helm and shield,
The mail, the acton, and the spear,
Strong hand, high heart, are useless here!
Loud from the mass confused the cry
Of dying warriors swells on high,
And steeds that shriek in agony!
They came like mountain-torrent red,
That thunders o'er its rocky bed;
They broke like that same torrent's wave
When swallow'd by a darksome cave.
Billows on billows burst and boil,
Maintaining still the stern turmoil,

And to their wild and tortured groan
Each adds new terrors of his own!

Too strong in courage and in might
Was England yet, to yield the fight.
  Her noblest all are here;
Names that to fear were never known,
Bold Norfolk's Earl De Brotherton,
  And Oxford's famed De Vere.
There Gloster plied the bloody sword,
And Berkley, Grey, and Hereford,
  Bottetourt and Sanzavere,
Ross, Montague, and Mauley, came,
And Courtenay's pride, and Percy's fame —
Names known too well in Scotland's war,
At Falkirk, Methven, and Dunbar,
Blazed broader yet in after years,
At Cressy red and fell Poitiers.
Pembroke with these, and Argentine,
Brought up the rearward battle-line.
With caution o'er the ground they tread,
Slippery with blood and piled with dead,
Till hand to hand in battle set,
The bills with spears and axes met,
And, closing dark on every side,
Raged the full contest far and wide.
Then was the strength of Douglas tried,
Then proved was Randolph's generous pride,
And well did Stewart's actions grace
The sire of Scotland's royal race!

Firmly they kept their ground;
As firmly England onward press'd,
And down went many a noble crest,
And rent was many a valiant breast,
And Slaughter revell'd round.

Unflinching foot 'gainst foot was set,
Unceasing blow by blow was met;
The groans of those who fell
Were drown'd amid the shriller clang
That from the blades and harness rang,
And in the battle-yell.
Yet fast they fell, unheard, forgot,
Both Southern fierce and hardy Scot;
And O! amid that waste of life,
What various motives fired the strife!
The aspiring Noble bled for fame,
The Patriot for his country's claim;
This Knight his youthful strength to prove,
And that to win his lady's love;
Some fought from ruffian thirst of blood,
From habit some, or hardihood.
But ruffian stern, and soldier good,
The noble and the slave,
From various cause the same wild road,
On the same bloody morning, trode,
To that dark inn, the grave!

The tug of strife to flag begins,
Though neither loses yet nor wins.

High rides the sun, thick rolls the dust,
And feebler speeds the blow and thrust.
Douglas leans on his war-sword now,
And Randolph wipes his bloody brow;
Nor less had toil'd each Southern knight,
From morn till mid-day in the fight.
Strong Egremont for air must gasp,
Beauchamp undoes his visor-clasp,
And Montague must quit his spear,
And sinks thy falchion, bold De Vere!
The blows of Berkley fall less fast,
And gallant Pembroke's bugle-blast
  Hath lost its lively tone;
Sinks, Argentine, thy battle-word,
And Percy's shout was fainter heard,
  "My merry-men, fight on!"

Bruce, with the pilot's wary eye,
The slackening of the storm could spy.
"One effort more, and Scotland 's free!
Lord of the Isles, my trust in thee
  Is firm as Ailsa Rock;
Rush on with Highland sword and targe,
I, with my Carrick spearmen charge;
  Now, forward to the shock!"
At once the spears were forward thrown,
Against the sun the broadswords shone;
The pibroch lent its maddening tone,
And loud King Robert's voice was known —
"Carrick, press on — they fail, they fail!

Press on, brave sons of Innisgail,
The foe is fainting fast!
Each strike for parent, child, and wife,
For Scotland, liberty, and life, —
The battle cannot last!"

The fresh and desperate onset bore
The foes three furlongs back and more,
Leaving their noblest in their gore.
Alone, De Argentine
Yet bears on high his red-cross shield,
Gathers the relics of the field,
Renews the ranks where they have reel'd,
And still makes good the line.
Brief strife, but fierce, — his efforts raise
A bright but momentary blaze.
Fair Edith heard the Southron shout,
Beheld them turning from the rout,
Heard the wild call their trumpets sent,
In notes 'twixt triumph and lament.
That rallying force, combined anew,
Appear'd in her distracted view,
To hem the Islesmen round;
"O God! the combat they renew,
And is no rescue found!
And ye that look thus tamely on
And see your native land o'erthrown,
O! are your hearts of flesh or stone?"

The multitude that watch'd afar,
Rejected from the ranks of war,

Had not unmoved beheld the fight,
When strove the Bruce for Scotland's right;
Each heart had caught the patriot spark,
Old man and stripling, priest and clerk,
Bondsman and serf; even female hand
Stretch'd to the hatchet or the brand;
But, when mute Amadine they heard
Give to their zeal his signal-word,
A frenzy fired the throng;
"Portents and miracles impeach
Our sloth — the dumb our duties teach —
And he that gives the mute his speech
Can bid the weak be strong.
To us, as to our lords, are given
A native earth, a promised heaven;
To us, as to our lords, belongs
The vengeance for our nation's wrongs;
The choice 'twixt death or freedom, warms
Our breasts as theirs — To arms, to arms!"
To arms they flew, — axe, club, or spear, —
And mimic ensigns high they rear,
And, like a banner'd host afar,
Bear down on England's wearied war.

Already scatter'd o'er the plain,
Reproof, command, and counsel vain,
The rearward squadrons fled amain,
Or made but doubtful stay;
But when they mark'd the seeming show
Of fresh and fierce and marshall'd foe,

The boldest broke array.
O give their hapless prince his due!
In vain the royal Edward threw
His person 'mid the spears,
Cried, "Fight!" to terror and despair,
Menaced, and wept, and tore his hair,
And cursed their caitiff fears;
Till Pembroke turn'd his bridle rein,
And forced him from the fatal plain.
With them rode Argentine, until
They gain'd the summit of the hill,
But quitted there the train: —
"In yonder field a gage I left, —
I must not live of fame bereft;
I needs must turn again.
Speed hence, my Liege, for on your trace
The fiery Douglas takes the chase,
I know his banner well.
God send my Sovereign joy and bliss,
And many a happier field than this! —
Once more, my Liege, farewell."

From

IVANHOE.

The Song of Rebecca.

When Israel, of the Lord beloved,
Out from the land of bondage came,

Her father's God before her moved,
An awful guide in smoke and flame.
By day, along the astonish'd lands
The clouded pillar glided slow;
By night, Arabia's crimson'd sands
Return'd the fiery column's glow.

There rose the choral hymn of praise,
And trump and timbrel answer'd keen,
And Zion's daughters pour'd their lays,
With priest's and warrior's voice between.
No portents now our foes amaze,
Forsaken Israel wanders lone:
Our fathers would not know Thy ways,
And Thou hast left them to their own.

But present still, though now unseen!
When brightly shines the prosperous day,
Be thoughts of Thee a cloudy screen
To temper the deceitful ray.
And oh, when stoops on Judah's path
In shade and storm the frequent night,
Be Thou, long-suffering, slow to wrath,
A burning and a shining light!

Our harps we left by Babel's streams,
The tyrant's jest, the Gentile's scorn;
No censer round our altar beams,
And mute are timbrel, harp, and horn.
But Thou hast said, The blood of goat,
The flesh of rams I will not prize;

A contrite heart, a humble thought,
Are mine accepted sacrifice.

From

QUENTIN DURWARD.

County Guy.

Ah! County Guy, the hour is nigh,
The sun has left the lea,
The orange flower perfumes the bower,
The breeze is on the sea.
The lark, his lay who thrill'd all day,
Sits hush'd his partner nigh;
Breeze, bird, and flower, confess the hour,
But where is County Guy?—

The village maid steals through the shade,
Her shepherd's suit to hear;
To beauty shy, by lattice high,
Sings high-born Cavalier.
The star of Love, all stars above,
Now reigns o'er earth and sky;
And high and low the influence know—
But where is County Guy?

From

THE MONASTERY.

Border Ballad.

March, march, Ettrick and Teviotdale,
Why the deil dinna ye march forward in order?
March, march, Eskdale and Liddesdale,
All the Blue Bonnets are bound for the Border.
Many a banner spread,
Flutters above your head,
Many a crest that is famous in story.
Mount and make ready then,
Sons of the mountain glen,
Fight for the Queen and our old Scottish glory.

Come from the hills where your hirsels are grazing,
Come from the glen of the buck and the roe;
Come to the crag where the beacon is blazing,
Come with the buckler, the lance, and the bow.
Trumpets are sounding,
War-steeds are bounding,
Stand to your arms, and march in good order,
England shall many a day
Tell of the bloody fray,
When the Blue Bonnets came over the Border.

X. GEORGE NOEL GORDON BYRON.

1788–1824.

In the year 1808 Sir Walter Scott published "Marmion," and was hailed as the first poet of the nineteenth century. In the same year the "Edinburgh Review" gave a short notice of a little volume of poems, "Hours of Idleness." Some critic, the great Lord Brougham probably, took time to laugh at it in print, and for a season no more was heard of it. In the next year, however, the laugh was returned with vengeance, when "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," a stinging satire full of clever epigrams, appeared in reply, from the author of "Hours of Idleness."

It attacked the critics and writers of the day right and left — "Blundering Brougham"; Walter Scott, "who racked his brains for lucre, not for fame"; Southey, the Poet Laureate, "Illustrious conqueror of common-sense"; Wordsworth, "who both by precept and example shows, that prose is verse, and verse is merely prose"; Coleridge, "to turgid ode and tumid stanza dear."

No one was spared by the lash of young Lord Byron, a lad of twenty, who had studied his "Dunciad" well, and tried to comfort himself for the failure of his first book by imitating Pope. Every one read the satire, and every one was interested to know the story of the author, who, though an English peer, "a lord, a braggart, and a genius," was almost entirely unknown in the great world. It was a strange story.

The boy, George Noel Gordon Byron, born in London in 1788, had a wild, dissipated father, who died when his little son was three years old. The child's mother loved him and pinched and economized to educate and care for him, yet often, in fits of rage, beat him and stormed at him and taunted him because he had a deformed foot and was lame. When he was ten years old and living in poverty in Aberdeen, his great-uncle died, and he became the sixth Lord Byron of Rochdale, and went with his mother and his faithful old nurse, Mary Gray, to see his new inheritance, the noble mansion of Newstead Abbey.

Tom Moore, Byron's famous biographer, tells the story that Mrs. Byron stopped at the entrance gate and asked the keeper to whom the place belonged. "They say it is a little boy who lives at Aberdeen," was the reply. Then Mary Gray could be quiet no longer and broke in, "And this is he, bless him!" hugging her nursling in delight and pride. Unfortunately for the boy, his new domain brought with it very little money; he could not live at Newstead; for years he suffered all the tortures of being poor and proud, and finally was obliged to part with his ancestral home.

He went to the great public school of Harrow, where the master said he was a wild mountain colt, but with mind in his eye. At the same time he was described by a young lady whom he went to visit as "a fat, bashful boy, with hair combed straight over his forehead, and looking a perfect gaby."

Only three years after, the perfect gaby had become famous for his beauty. He had spent three years at Cambridge; had starved himself thin, so that the delicate beauty of his features was apparent; had taken his seat in the House of Lords, and was now, when his satire appeared, lodging in London, with few friends; moody, and given to fits of rage

and of the sulks (a natural enough inheritance from his father and mother); "poor, extravagant, dissipated, and lonely."

Life seemed to offer little to please him. He had rank, of which he was enormously proud, but he wanted both money and friends, and Carlyle says: "He was a great, sulky dandy, who sulked because life gave him a plain bun, when he wanted a plum bun." Life in London offered so little to please him that he bethought himself to make a journey to Spain, Portugal, Greece, and the Islands of the Ægean, and in two years he brought back a famous traveler's diary — the first two cantos of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage." It was published in 1812, when Byron made his often-quoted remark, "I awoke one morning and found myself famous." All the world read "Childe Harold." There was a sudden Byron mania, and the poet became the lion of London in a day. Some one says of this lion that he had the misfortune to be well born and ill-bred, and had the pride of a peer with the self-consciousness of a parvenu. Certainly he thought his own emotions and sensations and follies and moods of immense interest and importance to the world, and wrote a series of splendid, brilliant, picturesque poems, — in all of which he appeared as his own hero, — "Lara," "The Corsair," "The Giaour," "The Bride of Abydos"; each one, Macaulay points out, has a dark, strange, melancholy creature, "a thing of dark imaginings," "with chilling mystery of mien," which Byron was quite willing should be thought to represent himself.

His brilliant career lasted just four years. Then his lovely young wife, who had been married for only twelve months, left him, it is said because his moods and passions were more agreeable in poetry than in real life. Society, which had idolized him, turned upon him with

hisses instead of praises, and in 1816 he left England again and forever.

Wandering once more over the Continent, leading a wild and sad and bad life, Byron wrote two more cantos of "Childe Harold," his very undramatic dramas, "Cain," "The Two Foscari," "Manfred," and "The Deformed Transformed," his "Prisoner of Chillon," and "Don Juan." Then he became deeply interested in the struggle of the Greeks for liberty. He said once that he had no hobby and no perseverance; but he had something better than a hobby — a genuine passion of the soul for freedom and independence; and he had perseverance enough in this great cause to go to Greece to help to organize forces and to contribute largely of his means. There, in 1824, he was suddenly seized with a fever and died at Missolonghi when he was but thirty-six, alone, except for a faithful valet.

Byron's story like that of Burns is a sad one, for, like Burns, he had immense powers, but not the power to rule himself. He wrote spirited, ringing verse which took the ear of the world away from "Marmion" and gave it to "Childe Harold"; but he did not "hold as 't were the mirror up to nature." He wanted nature to hold the mirror up to him, while he posed and admired himself before it. Yet he had a work to do in literature, and did it well.

Glorious John Dryden and King Alexander Pope ruled long over English letters, until the time came to prove that that great realm was not a monarchy but a republic. Goldsmith was the first among the poets with whom we have made friends, and who followed the Queen Anne's men, to write simple, natural verses; but he kept the art he had learned from Pope and polished his lines as his master taught him to do. Then came Burns, whistling his tunes and crooning his songs at the plough, a boy of fifteen when

Goldsmith died, and the first great poet of the new, free rule. Scott, too, was an independent; but a greater power than he was the "Revolutionary poet," Byron, who studied and praised Pope, but who wrote with the freedom and ease and grace which make this great century of our own one of the golden ages of English poetry.

From

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS.

Behold! in various throngs the scribbling crew,
For notice eager, pass in long review:
Each spurs his jaded Pegasus apace,
And rhyme and blank maintain an equal race;
Sonnets on sonnets crowd, and ode on ode;
And tales of terror jostle on the road;
Immeasurable measures move along;
For simpering Folly loves a varied song,
To strange mysterious Dulness still the friend,
Admires the strain she cannot comprehend.
Thus Lays of Minstrels — may they be the last!
On half-strung harps whine mournful to the blast,
While mountain spirits prate to river sprites,
That dames may listen to their sound at nights;
And goblin brats, of Gilpin Horner's brood,
Decoy young border-nobles through the wood,
And skip at every step, Lord knows how high,
And frighten foolish babes, the Lord knows why;
While high-born ladies in their magic cell,
Forbidding knights to read who cannot spell,
Despatch a courier to a wizard's grave,
And fight with honest men to shield a knave.
Next view in state, proud prancing on his roan,
The golden-crested haughty Marmion,

Now forging scrolls, now foremost in the fight,
Not quite a felon, yet but half a knight,
The gibbet or the field prepared to grace —
A mighty mixture of the great and base.
And think'st thou, SCOTT! by vain conceit perchance,
On public taste to foist thy stale romance,
Though MURRAY with his MILLER may combine
To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line?
No! when the sons of song descend to trade,
Their bays are sear, their former laurels fade.
Let such forego the poet's sacred name,
Who rack their brains for lucre, not for fame:
Low may they sink to merited contempt,
And scorn remunerate the mean attempt!
Such be their meed, such still the just reward
Of prostituted muse and hireling bard!
For this we spurn Apollo's venal son,
And bid a long "good night" to Marmion.

These are the themes that claim our plaudits now;
These are the bards to whom the muse must bow:
While MILTON, DRYDEN, POPE, alike forgot,
Resign their hallow'd bays to WALTER SCOTT.

The time has been when yet the muse was young,
When HOMER swept the lyre, and MARO sung,
An epic scarce ten centuries could claim,
While awe-struck nations hail'd the magic name:
The work of each immortal bard appears
The single wonder of a thousand years.
Empires have moulder'd from the face of earth,
Tongues have expired with those who gave them birth,

Without the glory such a strain can give,
As even in ruin bids the language live.
Not so with us, though minor bards, content,
On one great work a life of labour spent:
With eagle pinions soaring to the skies,
Behold the ballad monger, SOUTHEY, rise!
To him let CAMOENS, MILTON, TASSO, yield,
Whose annual strains, like armies, take the field,
First in the ranks see Joan of Arc advance,
The scourge of England, and the boast of France!
Though burnt by wicked BEDFORD for a witch,
Behold her statue placed in glory's niche,
Her fetters burst, and just released from prison,
A virgin Phœnix from her ashes risen.
Next see tremendous Thalaba come on,
Arabia's monstrous, wild, and wondrous son;
Domdaniel's dread destroyer, who o'erthrew
More mad magicians than the world e'er knew.
Immortal hero! all thy foes o'ercome,
For ever reign — the rival of Tom Thumb!
Since startled metre fled before thy face,
Well wert thou doom'd the last of all thy race!
Well might triumphant Genii bear thee hence,
Illustrious conqueror of common sense!
Now, last and greatest, Madoc spreads his sails,
Cacique in Mexico, and Prince in Wales;
Tells us strange tales, as other travellers do,
More old than Mandeville's, and not so true.
Oh! SOUTHEY, SOUTHEY! cease thy varied song!
A Bard may chaunt too often and too long:

As thou art strong in verse, in mercy spare!
A fourth, alas! were more than we could bear.
But if, in spite of all the world can say,
Thou still wilt verseward plod thy weary way;
If still in Berkley ballads, most uncivil,
Thou wilt devote old women to the devil,
The babe unborn thy dread intent may rue;
"God help thee," SOUTHEY, and thy readers too.
Next comes the dull disciple of thy school,
That mild apostate from poetic rule,
The simple WORDSWORTH, framer of a lay
As soft as evening in his favourite May;
Who warns his friend "to shake off toil and trouble;
And quit his books, for fear of growing double";
Who, both by precept and example, shows
That prose is verse, and verse is merely prose,
Convincing all, by demonstration plain,
Poetic souls delight in prose insane;
And Christmas stories, tortured into rhyme,
Contain the essence of the true sublime:
Thus when he tells the tale of Betty Foy,
The idiot mother of "an idiot Boy";
A moon-struck silly lad who lost his way,
And, like his bard, confounded night with day;
So close on each pathetic part he dwells,
And each adventure so sublimely tells,
That all who view the "idiot in his glory,"
Conceive the Bard the hero of the story.
Shall gentle COLERIDGE pass unnoticed here,
To turgid ode and tumid stanza dear?

Though themes of innocence amuse him best,
Yet still obscurity 's a welcome guest.
If Inspiration should her aid refuse
To him who takes a Pixy for a Muse,
Yet none in lofty numbers can surpass
The bard who soars to elegize an ass.
How well the subject suits his noble mind!
"A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind!"

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB.

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay wither'd and strown.

For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd;
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still.

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there roll'd not the breath of his pride:
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

From

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE.

CANTO III.

Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake,
With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
To waft me from distraction; once I loved
Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
Sounds sweet as if a sister's voice reproved,
That I with stern delights should e'er have been so moved.

It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
Mellow'd and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
Save darken'd Jura, whose capt heights appear

Precipitously steep; and, drawing near,
There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more.

He is an evening reveller, who makes
His life and infancy, and sings his fill;
At intervals, some bird from out the brakes
Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
There seems a floating whisper on the hill;
But that is fancy, for the starlight dews
All silently their tears of love instil,
Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
Deep into nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

Ye stars! which are the poetry of heaven!
If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
Of men and empires, — 't is to be forgiven,
That in our aspirations to be great,
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
A beauty and a mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar,
That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves a star.

All heaven and earth are still — though not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep: —
All heaven and earth are still: from the high host

Of stars, to the lull'd lake and mountain-coast,
All is concenter'd in a life intense,
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of being, and a sense
Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude, where we are *least* alone;
A truth, which through our being then doth melt,
And purifies from self: it is a tone,
The soul and source of music, which makes known
Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm,
Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
Binding all things with beauty; — 't would disarm
The spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm.

Not vainly did the early Persian make
His altar the high places and the peak
Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek
The spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak,
Unrear'd of human hands. Come, and compare
Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek,
With nature's realms of worship, earth and air,
Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy prayer!

From

CANTO IX.

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
A palace and a prison on each hand:

I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand.
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying glory smiles
O'er the far times when many a subject land
Look'd to the winged Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles!

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers
At airy distance, with majestic motion,
A ruler of the waters and their powers.
And such she was;—her daughters had their dowers
From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East
Pour'd in her lap all gems in sparkling showers:
In purple was she robed, and of her feast
Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dignity increased.

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,
And silent rows the songless gondolier;
Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
And music meets not always now the ear:
Those days are gone — but beauty still is here.
States fall, arts fade — but Nature doth not die;
Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear,
The pleasant place of all festivity,
The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy!

But unto us she hath a spell beyond
Her name in story, and her long array

Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond
Above the dogeless city's vanish'd sway;
Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor,
And Pierre, cannot be swept or worn away —
The keystones of the arch! though all were o'er,
For us repeopled were the solitary shore.

* * * *

In Santa Croce's holy precincts lie
Ashes which make it holier, dust which is
Even in itself an immortality,
Though there were nothing save the past, and this,
The particle of those sublimities
Which have relapsed to chaos: — here repose
Angelo's, Alfieri's bones, and his,
The starry Galileo, with his woes;
Here Machiavelli's earth returned to whence it rose.

These are four minds, which, like the elements,
Might furnish forth creation: — Italy!
Time, which hath wrong'd thee with ten thousand rents
Of thine imperial garment, shall deny,
And hath denied, to every other sky,
Spirits which soar from ruin: — thy decay
Is still impregnate with divinity,
Which gilds it with revivifying ray;
Such as the great of yore, Canova is to-day.

But where repose the all Etruscan three —
Dante, and Petrarch, and, scarce less than they,
The Bard of Prose, creative spirit ! he
Of the Hundred Tales of love — where did they lay
Their bones, distinguish'd from our common clay
In death as life ? Are they resolved to dust,
And have their country's marbles nought to say ?
Could not her quarries furnish forth one bust ?
Did they not to her breast their filial earth entrust ?

Ungrateful Florence ! Dante sleeps afar,
Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding shore ;
Thy factions, in their worse than civil war,
Proscribed the bard whose name for evermore
Their children's children would in vain adore
With the remorse of ages ; and the crown
Which Petrarch's laureate brow supremely wore,
Upon a far and foreign soil had grown,
His life, his fame, his grave, though rifled — not thine own.

Boccaccio to his parent earth bequeath'd
His dust, — and lies it not her great among,
With many a sweet and solemn requiem breathed
O'er him who form'd the Tuscan's siren tongue ?
That music in itself, whose sounds are song,
The poetry of speech ? No ; — even his tomb
Uptorn, must bear the hyæna bigot's wrong,
No more amidst the meaner dead find room,
Nor claim a passing sigh, because it told for *whom!*

And Santa Croce wants their mighty dust;
Yet for this want more noted, as of yore
The Cæsar's pageant, shorn of Brutus' bust,
Did but of Rome's best son remind her more:
Happier Ravenna! on thy hoary shore,
Fortress of falling empire! honour'd sleeps
The immortal exile;—Arqua, too, her store
Of tuneful relics proudly claims and keeps,
While Florence vainly begs her banish'd dead and weeps.

What is her pyramid of precious stones?
Of porphyry, jasper, agate, and all hues
Of gem and marble, to encrust the bones
Of merchant-dukes? the momentary dews
Which, sparkling to the twilight stars, infuse
Freshness in the green turf that wraps the dead,
Whose names are mausoleums of the muse,
Are gently prest with far more reverent tread
Than ever paced the slab which paves the princely head.

* * * *

Oh Rome! my country! city of the soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
Lone mother of dead empires! and control
In their shut breasts their petty misery.
What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, ye!
Whose agonies are evils of a day—
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe,
An empty urn within her wither'd hands,
Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago;
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress!

* * * *

Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,
Collecting the chief trophies of her line,
Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,
Her Coliseum stands; the moon-beams shine
As 't were its natural torches, for divine
Should be the light which streams here, to illume
This long-explored but still exhaustless mine
Of contemplation; and the azure gloom
Of an Italian night, where the deep skies assume

Hues which have words, and speak to ye of heaven,
Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,
And shadows forth its glory. There is given
Unto the things of earth, which time hath bent,
A spirit's feeling, and where he hath leant
His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a power
And magic in the ruined battlement,
For which the palace of the present hour
Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are its dower.

* * * *

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
In murmur'd pity, or loud-roar'd applause,
As man was slaughter'd by his fellow man.
And wherefore slaughter'd? wherefore, but because
Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
And the imperial pleasure. — Wherefore not?
What matters where we fall to fill the maws
Of worms — on battle-plains or listed spot?
Both are but theatres where the chief actors rot.

I see before me the gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand — his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his droop'd head sinks gradually low —
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
The arena swims around him — he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won.

He heard it, but he heeded not — his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away;
He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play;
There was their Dacian mother — he, their sire,
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday —
All this rush'd with his blood — Shall he expire,
And unavenged? — Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire.

But here, where murder breathed her bloody steam,
And here, where buzzing nations choked the ways,
And roar'd or murmur'd like a mountain stream
Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here, where the Roman million's blame or praise
Was death or life, the playthings of a crowd,
My voice sounds much—and fall the stars' faint rays
On the arena void — seats crush'd — walls bow'd —
And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely loud.

A ruin — yet what ruin! from its mass
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been rear'd;
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass
And marvel where the spoil could have appear'd.
Hath it indeed been plunder'd, or but clear'd?
Alas! developed, opens the decay,
When the colossal fabric's form is near'd:
It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all years, man, have rent away.

But when the rising moon begins to climb
Its topmost arch, and gently pauses there;
When the stars twinkle through the loops of time,
And the low night-breeze waves along the air
The garland-forest, which the gray walls wear,
Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head;
When the light shines serene but doth not glare,
Then in this magic circle raise the dead:
Heroes have trod this spot—'t is on their dust ye tread.

"While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;
And when Rome falls — the world." From our own land
Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall
In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
Ancient; and these three mortal things are still
On their foundations, and unalter'd all;
Rome and her ruin past redemption's skill,
The world, the same wide den — of thieves, or what ye will.

Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime —
Shrine of all saints, and temple of all gods,
From Jove to Jesus — spared and blest by time;
Looking tranquillity, while falls or nods
Arch, empire, each thing round thee, and man plods
His way through thorns to ashes — glorious dome!
Shalt thou not last? Time's scythe and tyrants' rods
Shiver upon thee — sanctuary and home
Of art and piety — Pantheon! — pride of Rome!

Relic of nobler days, and noblest arts;
Despoil'd yet perfect, with thy circle spreads
A holiness appealing to all hearts —
To art a model; and to him who treads
Rome for the sake of ages, glory sheds
Her light through thy sole aperture; to those
Who worship, here are altars for their beads;

And they who feel for genius may repose
Their eyes on honour'd forms, whose busts around them close.

* * * *

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.

Roll on, thou deep and dark-blue ocean — roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin — his control
Stops with the shore; — upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

His steps are not upon thy paths, — thy fields
Are not a spoil for him, — thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,

And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray
And howling, to his gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth: — there let him lay.

The armaments which thunder-strike the walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war;
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
Alike the Armada's pride, or spoils of Trafalgar.

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee.
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
Thy waters wasted them while they were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts: — not so thou,
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play —
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow —
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,
Calm or convulsed — in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving; — boundless, endless, and sublime —

The image of eternity — the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

From

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON.

Eternal spirit of the chainless mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart —
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consign'd —
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar — for 't was trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard! — May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

From

MANFRED.

ACT III., SCENE IV.

Manfred.

THE stars are forth, the moon above the tops
Of the snow-shining mountains. — Beautiful!
I linger yet with Nature, for the night
Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man; and in her starry shade
Of dim and solitary loveliness,
I learn'd the language of another world.
I do remember me, that in my youth,
When I was wandering, — upon such a night
I stood within the Coliseum's wall
'Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome;
The trees which grew along the broken arches
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars
Shone through the rents of ruin; from afar
The watch-dog bay'd beyond the Tiber; and
More near from out the Cæsar's palace came
The owl's long cry, and interruptedly,
Of distant sentinels the fitful song
Begun and died upon the gentle wind.
Some cypresses beyond the time-worn breach
Appear'd to skirt the horizon, yet they stood
Within a bow-shot — where the Cæsars dwelt,
And dwell the tuneless birds of night, amidst
A grove which springs through levell'd battlements,

And twines its roots with the imperial hearths,
Ivy usurps the laurel's place of growth; —
But the gladiator's bloody Circus stands,
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection!
While Cæsar's chambers, and the Augustan halls,
Grovel on earth in indistinct decay. —
And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,
Which soften'd down the hoar austerity
Of rugged desolation, and fill'd up,
As 't were anew, the gaps of centuries:
Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
And making that which was not, till the place
Became religion, and the heart ran o'er
With silent worship of the great of old! —
The dead, but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule
Our spirits from their urns. —

From

DON JUAN.

CANTO III.

The isles of Greece! the isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung, —
Where grew the arts of war and peace, —
Where Delos rose and Phœbus sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

The Scian and the Teian muse,
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse;
Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' "Islands of the Bless'd."

The mountains look on Marathon —
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
For, standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations; — all were his!
He counted them at break of day —
And when the sun set, where were they?

And where are they? and where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now —
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

'T is something, in the dearth of fame,
Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,

Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush — for Greece a tear.

Must we but weep o'er days more bless'd?
Must we but blush? — Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ.

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no; — the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, "Let one living head,
But one arise, — we come, we come!"
'T is but the living who are dumb.

In vain — in vain; strike other chords;
Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
Hark! rising to the ignoble call —
How answers each bold bacchanal!

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet,
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave —
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine:
He served — but served Polycrates —
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock and Parga's shore
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown
The Heracleidan blood might own.

Trust not for freedom to the Franks —
They have a king who buys and sells.
In native swords and native ranks
The only hope of courage dwells;
But Turkish force and Latin fraud
Would break your shield, however broad.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade —
I see their glorious black eyes shine;

But, gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep —
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
There swan-like, let me sing and die.
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine —
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

XI. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

1770–1850.

THE glory of the North of England is the Lake Country, and the glory of the Lake Country is Wordsworth. In Cumberland, the land of hollows, and Westmoreland, the land of the western moors, with a part of Lancaster, the camp on the Lune, between them, lies the Lake district. It has long been famed for its noble hills, Skiddaw and Saddleback, Helvellyn and Crossfell; for its rivers, the Eden, the Esk, the Derwent, and the Duddon; for its waters, meres, and tarns — Windermere, Grasmere, and Rydalmere, Ullswater, Derwentwater, Coniston Water, all the lovely chain of lakes, large and small, which have given a name to the countryside. But it was reserved for three young men, poor and unknown all of them at the outset of their career, to give to the Lake Country its best fame, to England two Laureates, and to English poetry "The Lake School."

These three, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, came to live in Cumberland at the very end of the last century. They were already bound together by early friendship and by early enthusiasms — for Liberty, as they saw her stirring in France in the Revolution, for Equality and Fraternity, and, above all, for poetry, which they felt called to comprehend and to create. Southey was a man of letters, a scholar, a devourer of books. He was poor and generous. He settled down at Keswick, and for fifty years toiled patiently to meet his own responsibilities, and as many other people's as

possible. He wrote book reviews, histories, biographies, essays, and half a dozen epics, more or less — "Joan of Arc," and "Thalaba," and "Kehama," and "Madoc" — and in 1813 was made Poet Laureate. He was entirely uninspired, and thought himself great at the only point where he was small — his verse-making. He was one of the noblest of English gentlemen and one of the most tedious of English poets, "whose epics will be read when Homer and Virgil are forgotten — *but not till then.*" Coleridge was one of the great geniuses. But he had not "the ruling faculty," and his life and work are like scattered fragments of what might have been a glorious whole. By turns a Cambridge student, a private in the ranks, a Unitarian preacher, a journalist, a secretary, a lecturer, a student of German metaphysics, he was always a brilliant and profound critic, and for one marvelous year — his twenty-fifth year, when he wrote "Christabel" and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" — a great poet. His eloquence was a spell which for years held his hearers in bonds. He ate opium and talked, while Southey, his brother-in-law, worked early and late to support the Coleridge family at Keswick. So the flame of his genius flashed up, burned with an unsteady light, and went out in darkness.

Wordsworth, greatest of the three, was *the* Lake Poet, whose friends were classed with him at first by way of ridicule, and then by association of place and companionship, never because their work was in any degree alike. Born at Cockermouth in 1770, he spent his boyhood in rambling over the hills and dales until he knew every rock and tarn and fell and fall by heart. He was left an orphan when a little boy, and an uncle sent him to Cambridge, gave him a trip abroad, and then asked him to face the practical question of earning a living. But he turned with distaste from

one profession after another, and seemed "an unpromising and rather discouraging young man." A young friend, however, seeing in him uncommon powers, left him a legacy of nine hundred pounds. His "exquisite sister Dorothy" joined to this her fortune, one hundred pounds, and with this little sum the two went into Dorsetshire and began their ideal life of "plain living and high thinking." Passionate lovers of nature, they promised themselves to make poetry do justice to her charms, and this life-work Wordsworth began at twenty-two. Coleridge was then living near them, and they met and were friends on the moment. For twelve months he and Wordsworth walked and talked and improvised verses and theorized about poetry together, while Dorothy, a most artistic listener and a frugal and dainty housewife, alternately provided for their comfort and furnished a stimulating audience for their poems.

Wordsworth at this beginning of his life declared, and for sixty years stood by and defended, the two theories which characterize his work. He said that it was the true province of poetry to show the beauty, the value, and the power of the every-day life of men, in their every-day surroundings.

Long have I loved what I behold,
  The night that calms, the day that cheers,
The common growth of Mother Earth
Suffices me — her tears, her mirth,
  Her humblest mirth and tears.

He said, too, that there was properly no such thing as the much-talked-of "poetic diction," but that the natural way of expressing any idea was as suitable in poetry as it was in prose — "that the language of a large portion of every good poem must necessarily, except with reference to the meter, in no respect differ from that of good prose."

The first theory gave English poetry some of its greatest glories, and the second, when carried to its extreme, some of its greatest absurdities. In 1798 Wordsworth and Coleridge published together "Lyrical Ballads" — "The Idiot Boy," and "Goody Blake and Harry Gill," for example — and Coleridge's "The Ancient Mariner," written to support *his* theory that the province of poetry was to link nature with the supernatural, and to rouse in men's minds an awful interest in the world which lies not around but just beyond them.

As soon as the book was published, the two poets, with Dorothy in company, went off for a few months in Germany. In 1799 Wordsworth came back to Cumberland, married a favorite cousin, Mary Hutchinson, and lived with her and her sister, his sister, and his children, a noble, simple, frugal life, for half a century, most of it at Rydal Mount. He lived mainly in the open air, improvising poetry as he walked — "booing about," his neighbors called it — taking long rambles over the hills, and making an occasional trip to Switzerland, Italy, and Scotland.

When he came back from Germany, he found all England laughing at the "Lyrical Ballads," and the critics declaring that one poet was feeble-minded, the other crazy, and both very impertinent to the public. But Wordsworth was not to be laughed into silence. He planned a philosophical poem "On Man, Nature, and Society," in three parts, of which he published only the second — "The Excursion." "The Prelude," an account of the growth and development of his own mind, was named and printed by his wife after his death.

He wrote between four and five hundred sonnets, some of them among the finest in our language.

He wrote exquisite lyrics, "Daffodils" and "The Solitary

Reaper." He wrote the classic treasure "Laodamia." He wrote a poem to his wife, "A creature not too bright and good for human nature's daily food," which ranks with Richard Steele's "To love her was a liberal education," as the noblest tribute to a woman from a poet; he wrote the great ode on the "Intimations of Immortality," which Emerson calls "the high-water mark which the intellect of our age has reached"; and among many others he wrote a characteristic little poem, "The Star-Gazers," which deserves study because it combines power and puerility in true Wordsworthian style.

He is not the poet of youth, for "he has not humor, felicity, passion," which youth demands; but he delights childhood, which must have simplicity, and manhood, which must have strength. Ridiculed unsparingly and almost malignantly, slowly appreciated, abundantly honored and revered, and given at last the laureateship, Wordsworth lived for eighty years.

He lived to see Scott and Byron and Moore, and then Tennyson, all snatch from him the bauble of popularity. But he is ranked by late and great and wise judges, where probably he himself would have wished to stand, as the next poet to his master, Milton.

LINES,

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR. JULY 13, 1798.

FIVE years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur. — Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which, at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration: — feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened: — that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on, —
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft —

In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart —
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again;
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all. — I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colors and their forms, were then to me

An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. — That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing often times
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear, — both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,

The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 't is her privilege
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,

When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance —
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence — wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love — oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

From

PETER BELL.

Long have I loved what I behold,
The night that calms, the day that cheers;
The common growth of mother-earth

Suffices me — her tears, her mirth,
Her humblest mirth and tears.

The dragon's wing, the magic ring,
I shall not covet for my dower,
If I along that lowly way
With sympathetic heart may stray,
And with a soul of power.

These given, what more need I desire
To stir, to soothe, or elevate?
What nobler marvels than the mind
May in life's daily prospect find,
May find or there create?

TO THE CUCKOO.

O BLITHE New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,

Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery.

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet:
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, fairy place:
That is fit home for Thee!

IF THIS GREAT WORLD.

If this great world of joy and pain
Revolve in one sure track;
If freedom, set, will rise again,
And virtue, flown, come back;
Woe to the purblind crew who fill
The heart with each day's care;
Nor gain, from past or future, skill
To bear, and to forbear!

From

LINES WRITTEN ON THE APPROACHING DEATH OF MR. FOX.

A power is passing from the earth
To breathless Nature's dark abyss:
But where the great and good depart
What is it more than this —

That man, who is from God sent forth
Doth yet again to God return?
Such ebb and flow must ever be,
Then wherefore should we mourn?

SONNETS.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPTEMBER 3, 1802.

Earth has not anything to show more fair;
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING.

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun

Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea:
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder — everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE.

Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den;—
O miserable Chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;
There 's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND.

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice.
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven:
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful voice be heard by thee!

MILTON, THOU SHOULD'ST BE LIVING AT THIS HOUR.

Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters; altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.

Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea;
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

NUNS FRET NOT AT THEIR CONVENT'S NARROW ROOM.

Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room;
And hermits are contented with their cells,
And students with their pensive citadels,
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,
High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
In truth the prison, unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,
In sundry moods, 't was pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

SCORN NOT THE SONNET; CRITIC, YOU HAVE FROWNED.

Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honors; with this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faeryland
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
Soul-animating strains — alas, too few!

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US.

The world is too much with us: late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;

It moves us not. — Great God! I 'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn :
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

STAR-GAZERS.

WHAT crowd is this ? what have we here ! we must not pass it by ;
A Telescope upon its frame, and pointed to the sky :
Long is it as a barber's pole, or mast of little boat,
Some little pleasure-skiff, that doth on Thames's waters float.

The Show-man chooses well his place, 't is Leicester's busy Square ;
And is as happy in his night, for the heavens are blue and fair ;
Calm, though impatient, is the crowd ; each stands ready with the fee,
And envies him that 's looking ; — what an insight must it be !

Yet, Show-man, where can lie the cause ? Shall thy implement have blame,
A boaster, that when he is tried, fails, and is put to shame ?

Or is it good as others are, and be their eyes in fault?
Their eyes, or minds? or, finally, is yon resplendent vault?

Is nothing of that radiant pomp so good as we have here?
Or gives a thing but small delight that never can be dear?
The silver moon with all her vales, and hills of mightiest fame,
Doth she betray us when they 're seen? or are they but a name?

Or is it rather that Conceit rapacious is and strong,
And bounty never yields so much but it seems to do her wrong?
Or is it, that when human Souls a journey long have had
And are returned into themselves, they cannot but be sad?

THE SOLITARY REAPER.

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;

O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago;
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

YARROW UNVISITED.

From Stirling castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravelled;
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travelled;
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my "*winsome Marrow*,"
"Whate'er betide, we 'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow."

"Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
Who had been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, 't is their own;
Each maiden to her dwelling!
On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

"There 's Galla Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us;
And Dryborough, where with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus;
There 's pleasant Tiviot-dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow:
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow?

"What 's Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under?

There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder."
— Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn;
My True-love sighed for sorrow;
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow!

"Oh! green," said I, "are Yarrow's holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing!
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,
But we will leave it growing.
O'er hilly path, and open Strath,
We 'll wander Scotland thorough;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

"Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
The swan on still St. Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow!
We will not see them; will not go,
To-day, not yet to-morrow;
Enough if in our hearts we know
There 's such a place as Yarrow.

"Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own:
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We 'll keep them, winsome Marrow!

For when we 're there, although 't is fair,
'T will be another Yarrow!

"If Care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'T will soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow!"

From

THE EXCURSION.

BOOK IV.

"As men from men
Do, in the constitution of their souls,
Differ, by mystery not to be explained;
And as we fall by various ways, and sink
One deeper than another, self-condemned,
Through manifold degrees of grief and shame;
So manifold and various are the ways
Of restoration, fashioned to the steps
Of all infirmity, and tending all
To the same point, attainable by all —
Peace in ourselves, and union with our God.

* * * *

I have seen
A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
Of inland ground, applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell;
To which, in silence hushed, his very soul
Listened intensely; and his countenance soon
Brightened with joy; for from within were heard
Murmurings, whereby the monitor expressed
Mysterious union with its native sea.
Even such a shell the universe itself
Is to the ear of Faith; and there are times,
I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
Authentic tidings of invisible things;
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation. Here you stand,
Adore, and worship, when you know it not;
Pious beyond the intention of your thought;
Devout above the meaning of your will.
— Yes, you have felt, and may not cease to feel.
The estate of man would be indeed forlorn
If false conclusions of the reasoning power
Made the eye blind, and closed the passages
Through which the ear converses with the heart.
Has not the soul, the being of your life,
Received a shock of awful consciousness,
In some calm season, when these lofty rocks
And night's approach bring down the unclouded sky,
To rest upon their circumambient walls;
A temple framing of dimensions vast,

And yet not too enormous for the sound
Of human anthems, — choral song, or burst
Sublime of instrumental harmony,
To glorify the Eternal! What if these
Did never break the stillness that prevails
Here, — if the solemn nightingale be mute,
And the soft woodlark here did never chant
Her vespers, — Nature fails not to provide
Impulse and utterance. The whispering air
Sends inspiration from the shadowy heights,
And blind recesses of the caverned rocks;
The little rills, and waters numberless,
Inaudible by daylight, blended their notes
With the loud streams: and often, at the hour
When issue forth the first pale stars, is heard,
Within the circuit of this fabric huge,
One voice — the solitary raven, flying
Athwart the concave of the dark blue dome,
Unseen, perchance above all power of sight —
An iron knell! with echoes from afar
Faint — and still fainter — as the cry, with which
The wanderer accompanies her flight
Through the calm region, fades upon the ear,
Diminishing by distance till it seemed
To expire; yet from the abyss is caught again,
And yet again recovered!"

SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT.

She was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eyes serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;

A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS.

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

THREE YEARS SHE GREW IN SUN AND SHOWER.

Three years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;

This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend,
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake — The work was done —
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene:
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD.

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed — and gazed — but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

ODE.

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore; —
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong;
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

Ye blessed Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see

The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee ;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel — I feel it all.
Oh evil day ! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh bowers ; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm : —
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear !
— But there 's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone :
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat :
Whither is fled the visionary gleam ?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream ?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
The soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar :
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home :
Heaven lies about us in our infancy !

Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And even with something of a Mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely Nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learned art!
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral,

And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song;
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little Actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage,
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy Soul's immensity;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted forever by the eternal mind,—
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke

The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest;
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hopes still fluttering in his breast:—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which be they what they may
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;

Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now forever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy

Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

ODE TO DUTY.

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love

Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot;
Who do thy work, and know it not:
Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:

And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face.
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;

The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR.

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
Whose high endeavors are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives:
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;
Is placable — because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,

As tempted more: more able to endure
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
— 'T is he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labors good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows;
— Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honorable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honors, or for worldly state;
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all;
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a Lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law

In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
— He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes;
Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this, that he hath much to love: —
'T is, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
Or left unthought of in obscurity, —
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not —
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
Forever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name —
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:

This is the happy Warrior; this is He
That every Man in arms should wish to be.

SO FAIR, SO SWEET, WITHAL SO SENSITIVE.

So fair, so sweet, withal so sensitive,
Would that the little flowers were born to live
Conscious of half the pleasure that they give;
That to this mountain-daisy's self were known
The beauty of its star-shaped shadow, thrown
On the smooth surface of this naked stone!
And what if hence a bold desire should mount
High as the sun, that he could take account
Of all that issues from his glorious fount!
So might he ken how by his sovereign aid
These delicate companionships are made;
And how he rules the pomp of light and shade;
And were the Sister-power that rules by night
So privileged, what a countenance of delight
Would through the clouds break forth on human sight!
Fond fancies! Wheresoe'er shall turn thine eye
On earth, air, ocean or the starry sky,
Converse with Nature in pure sympathy;
All vain desires, all lawless wishes quelled,
Be thou to love and praise alike impelled
Whatever boon is granted or withheld.

XII. ALFRED TENNYSON.

1809–1892.

Claribel.

Where Claribel low lieth,
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose leaves fall;
But the solemn oak tree sigheth —
Thick-leaved ambrosial —
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low lieth.

Crossing the Bar.

Twilight and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark.
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark.

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place,
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the bar.

THESE verses are the Alpha and Omega of a poet's song. The first was written by Alfred Tennyson, a college boy of twenty-one, with no laurels except those of a Cambridge prize poem; the last by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, the veteran of eighty-two, the Poet Laureate of England. The lifetime between them was devoted entirely to the great art of poetry and made the young singer, with his pretty melody of "Claribel," the popular English poet of the nineteenth century — "Our Poet."

The son of a retired Lincolnshire clergyman, Tennyson was born in the rectory of the hamlet of Somersby in 1809. Miss Thackeray has drawn a charming sketch of the little Tennysons, of whom there were a dozen boys and girls, growing up in the early days of our century in a beautiful English home, the atmosphere they breathed full of refinement, cultivation, and affection. She tells pretty stories of the three older sons, who were all poets; of little Alfred coming with a slate in his hand to Charles, the next older, and asking a subject for a poem; then, while the others were all at church, sitting under the trees and writing on the flowers in the garden, modeling his verses on Thompson's "Seasons," and of how Charles came home, read the lines and handed back the slate, saying, "Yes, you can write." She tells of the games they played, King Arthur and his knights, of the serial stories which, like the little Brontës, they wrote for each other's amusement, and of their beautiful and gentle mother, of whom her son wrote in his "Princess":

> "Happy he
> With such a mother. Faith in womankind
> Beats with his blood."

Out of this happy childhood Tennyson came as a young man to Cambridge University. His master was the distin-

guished Whewell, and his friends a brilliant group of the most promising young men of the day. He had published, with his brother Charles, a little volume, "Poems of Two Brothers," and in 1829 he took the Chancellor's medal for a poem, the first printed under his own name, on "Timbuctoo." Some of the undergraduates were publishing a little paper called the "Snob," at the time, and one of them made his first appearance in print with a burlesque of Tennyson, which he introduced by this note:

To the Editor of the *Snob*:

SIR, — Though your name be "Snob," I trust that you will not refuse this tiny "Poem of a Gownsman," which was, unluckily, not finished on the day appointed for delivery of the several copies of verses on "Timbuctoo." I thought, Sir, that it would be a pity that such a poem should be lost to the world, and, conceiving the *Snob* to be the most widely circulated periodical in Europe, I have taken the liberty of submitting it for insertion or approbation.

I am, Sir, yours, etc., T.

This saucy freshman of seventeen, poking fun at the prize man of Trinity, was Thackeray, the greatest novelist and humorist of the century, laughing at its best-known poet, who, he said afterwards, when they were warm friends, was the wisest man he knew.

He was wise enough, certainly, to fulfil with seriousness the joking maxim for poets, which Thackeray afterward put into the mouth of Yellowplush: "Its generally best in poatry to understand pufficklywhat you mean yourself, and to igspress your meaning clearly afterwoods, in the simpler words the better p'r'aps." We shall find no thought which tries to pass for profound by being obscure, no expression which shirks the duty of saying what it means, in the work of

Tennyson. This work began in the year 1830 with a small volume, "Poems Chiefly Lyrical," of which the first is "Claribel." Another volume followed in 1832 with "The Lady of Shalott," "Oenone," "The Lotos Eaters," and "The Miller's Daughter," — said to have gained the writer the Laureateship. Then for ten years the poet was silent, profiting by some sound criticism from Christopher North and "the scorpion," Lockhart. In 1842 he published two volumes of poems, including some of his best-loved ones, "Locksley Hall," and "Dora," the "Morte d'Arthur," "Ulysses," "Sir Galahad," and "Break, Break, Break," which met with immediate and immense favor. Bulwer laughed at him, it is true; said his poetry was "ladylike," and called him "Miss Alfred"; but a pension of two hundred pounds was a substantial solace for so slight a wound.

The year 1850 was a golden one in Tennyson's history. In this year he made his happy marriage with a niece of Sir John Franklin, with whom he lived at Farringford, in the Isle of Wight, and at Aldworth, in Surrey, for nearly half a century, children and grandchildren, peace, plenty, and honor surrounding them. In this year he wrote his noble poem "In Memoriam," immortalizing the memory of Arthur Hallam, the dear friend of his youth, betrothed to his sister, who died suddenly abroad in 1833; and in this year, when, on the twenty-third of April, the anniversary of Shakespeare's death, Wordsworth, the Laureate, died, Tennyson took

> "The laurel, greener from the brows
> Of him who uttered nothing base."

"The Princess," a medley of story and theory and sweetest song; "In Memoriam," the elegy which sums up the

hopes and doubts and fears and questionings of a generation; "Maud," the monodrama, with its thrilling love song; and "The Idylls of the King," which takes up the theme once chosen by Milton, the story of Arthur and "that great order of the table round," and makes it live again, —

"An old imperfect tale
New old, and shadowing sense at war with soul," —

these are Tennyson's most important poems, two of them, "In Memoriam" and "The Idylls," his greatest work. He followed them with six dramas, with lyric upon lyric, and in his extreme old age with his graceful picture of Robin Hood and his merry men, his play of "The Foresters."

But Tennyson is not a dramatist. He is a lyric poet, with the sweetness of a native singer and the patient polish and perfection of a great artist.

To think clear and noble thoughts — the thoughts of a good man in a great era — and to express them with clearness and beauty was the work of Tennyson, "the Galahad of Song."

He is said, more than all other poets of his day, to reflect his age in his work. If this is so, we may take as its motto his own lines describing a sacred rock in Siam, whose markings express the likeness of Buddha to all who have faith to see them:

"Phra — Chai: the shadow of the best."

In October, 1892, Tennyson died, full of years and of honors, and his death was, itself, a poem. Lying upon his couch, the moonlight streaming in through the oriel window, his outstretched hand resting upon his copy of Shakespeare, opened at the dirge in "Cymbeline," like David he "fell on

sleep," — the last of the great English singers who, each in turn, have served art as David served God, "in his own generation."

Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton; Dryden, Pope, Goldsmith, and Burns; Scott, Byron, Wordsworth, and Tennyson, — these are the inheritors in a direct line of the great gift of English song; — our best friends —

> "Who gave us nobler loves and nobler cares,
> The poets, who on earth have made us heirs,
> Of truth and pure delights by heavenly lays."

POEMS.

ST. AGNES.

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon:
My breath to heaven like vapor goes:
May my soul follow soon!
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord:
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soiled and dark,
To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.

Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
  Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
  In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;
  The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
  And strews her lights below,
And deepens on and up! the gates
  Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
  To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
  One sabbath deep and wide —
A light upon the shining sea —
  The Bridegroom with his bride!

From

IN MEMORIAM.

A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII.

I.

I HELD it truth, with him who sings
  To one clear harp in divers tones,
  That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years,
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss:
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
"Behold the man that loved and lost
But all he was is overworn."

II.

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the underlying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the flock;
And in the dusk of thee, the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom:

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

III.

O sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip?

"The stars," she whispers, "blindly run;
A web is wov'n across the sky;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun:

"And all the phantom, Nature, stands, —
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own, —
A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good;
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away;
My will is bondsman to the dark;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse and say:

"O heart, how fares it with thee now,
That thou shouldst fail from thy desire,
Who scarcely darest to inquire
'What is it makes me beat so low?'"

Something it is which thou hast lost,
Some pleasure from thine early years.
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darken'd eyes;
With morning wakes the will, and cries,
"Thou shalt not be the fool of loss."

V.

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;
For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the cold;
But that large grief which these enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

VI.

One writes that "Other friends remain,"
That "Loss is common to the race," —
And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more:
Too common! Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgest now thy gallant son;
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor, — while thy head is bow'd,
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him well;
Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something thought:

Expecting still his advent home:
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, "here to-day,"
Or "here to-morrow will he come."

O somewhere, meek unconscious dove,
That sittest ranging golden hair;
And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest;
And thinking "This will please him best,"
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
And with the thought her color burns;
And, having left the glass, she turns
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, ev'n when she turn'd, the curse
Had fallen, and her future Lord
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of good?
To her, perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.

XXVII.

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes:

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth,
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'T is better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII.

The time draws near the birth of Christ:
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and good-will, good-will and peace,
Peace and good-will, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controll'd me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,
The merry, merry bells of Yule.

LIV.

O yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last — far off — at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

LV.

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LXIV.

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
As some divinely gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known,
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are still,
A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He play'd at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
And reaps the labor of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands:
"Does my old friend remember me?"

CIV.

The time draws near the birth of Christ:
The moon is hid, the night is still;
A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other days,
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

From

THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY.

One

Not learned, save in gracious household ways,
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants.
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Interpreter between the Gods and men,
Who look'd all native to her place, and yet
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,
And girded her with music. Happy he
With such a mother! faith in womankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall
He shall not blind his soul with clay.

Songs.

As thro' the land at eve we went,
  And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
  And kiss'd again with tears.

For when we came where lies the child
  We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
  We kiss'd again with tears.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar

The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow forever and forever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

"TEARS, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

"Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in life, the days that are no more."

Home they brought her warrior dead:
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry:
All her maidens, watching, said,
"She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Call'd him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stept,
Took the face-cloth from the face;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee —
Like summer tempest came her tears —
"Sweet my child, I live for thee."

THE IDYLLS OF THE KING.

From

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonnesse about their lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep — the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made, —
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more — but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm

That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword — and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In after-time, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seëst, and lightly bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him drawing it, the winter moon,

Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded king.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fëalty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again

As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud:—

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The king is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to after-time, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the after-time

To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded king.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the king.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle of yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 't is time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the king,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang

Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels —
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold — and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"
So to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the king, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls —
That made his forehead like a rising sun

High from the däis-throne — were parch'd with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the king;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,
"Ah! my lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved,
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfills himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within himself make pure! but thou,

If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seëst — if indeed I go —
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

At length he groan'd, and turning slowly clomb
The last hard footstep of that iron crag;
Thence mark'd the black hull moving yet, and cried,
"He passes to be king among the dead,
And after healing of his grievous wound
He comes again; but — if he come no more —
O me, be yon dark Queens in yon black boat,
Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three whereat we gazed
On that high day, when, clothed with living light,
They stood before his throne in silence, friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need?"

Then from the dawn it seem'd there came, but faint
As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about, and clomb
E'en to the highest he could climb, and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the king,
Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
From less to less and vanish into light.
And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

SONGS.

Enid's Song.

It chanced the song that Enid sang was one
Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid sang:

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and lower the proud;
Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm, and cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown;
With that wild wheel we go not up or down;
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

"Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands;
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands;
For man is man and master of his fate.

"Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring crowd;
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate."

Vivien's Song.

And Vivien, like the tenderest-hearted maid
That ever bided tryst at village stile,
Made answer, either eyelid wet with tears:
"Nay, master, be not wrathful with your maid;
Caress her: let her feel herself forgiven
Who feels no heart to ask another boon.
I think you hardly know the tender rhyme
Of 'trust me not at all or all in all.'

I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it once,
And it shall answer for me. Listen to it.

"'In Love, if Love be Love, if Love be ours,
Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers:
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

"'It is the little rift within the lute,
That by and by will make the music mute,
And ever widening slowly silence all.

"'The little rift within the lover's lute,
Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,
That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

"'It is not worth the keeping: let it go:
But shall it? answer, darling, answer, no.
And trust me not at all or all in all.'"

Elaine's Song.

And in those days she made a little song,
And call'd her song "The Song of Love and Death,"
And sang it: sweetly could she make and sing.

"Sweet is true love, tho' given in vain, in vain:
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain:
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be:
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

"Sweet Love, that seems not made to fade away,
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"I fain would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die."

The Little Maid's Song to Guinevere.

The Queen look'd up, and said,

"O maiden, if indeed you list to sing,
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may weep."
Whereat full willingly sang the little maid.

"Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"No light had we: for that we do repent;
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"No light: so late! and dark and chill the night!
O let us in, that we may find the light!
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now."

SIR GALAHAD.

My good blade carves the casques of men,
  My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
  Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
  The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
  The horse and rider reel:
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
  And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
  That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
  On whom their favors fall!
For them I battle to the end,
  To save from shame and thrall:
But all my heart is drawn above,
  My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine:
I never felt the kiss of love,
  Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
  Me mightier transports move and thrill;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
  A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
  A light before me swims,

Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns:
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice, but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chants resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark;
I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the holy Grail:
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
Thro' dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, spins from brand and mail;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,

And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branchy thicket shelter yields:
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight — to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odors haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armor that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
"O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near."
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the holy Grail.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

PART I.

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-towered Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs forever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?

Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers, "'T is the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

PART II.

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:

There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights,
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half-sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III.

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,

And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A redcross knight forever kneeled
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd

His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV.

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse —
Like some bold seer in a trance,

Seeing all his own mischance —
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right —
The leaves upon her falling light —
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willow hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot;
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,

A gleaming shape she floated by,
A corse between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer:
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space:
He said, "She has a lovely face:
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK.

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

ULYSSES.

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I meet and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honor'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.

I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
Forever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
  This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle —
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
  There lies the port: the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought
    with me —

That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads — you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'T is not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

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GLOSSARY.

CHAUCER.

Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.

swich, such.
foweles, birds.
hir corages, their minds or hearts.
ferne halwes, distant shrines.
kowthe, known.
esed atte beste, accommodated in the best way.
everychon, each one.
forward, agreement, promise.
ther as, where.
devyse, relate, narrate.
Alisaundre, Alexandria.
bord bigonne, begun the table, *i.e.*, been placed at the head of the table.
Pruce, Prussia.
Lettow, Lithuania.
Ruce, Russia.
Gernade, Granada.
Algezir, Algeciras.
Belmarye, Benamarin.
Lyeys, Ayas.
Satalye, Attalia.
Tramyssene, Tremessen.
Palatye, Palathia.
Turkye, Turkey.
prys, renown, fame.
vileynye, churlish speech.
gypoun, short cassock.
bismotered, marked with rust.
habergeoun, hawberk.
viage, travels.
lokkes crulle, curly locks.
evene lengthe, average height.
natheless, nevertheless.
er, before.
pace, proceed.
ferre, farther.
delyvere, active, agile.
chyvachie, a military expedition.
embrouded, embroidered.
floytynge, playing on the flute.
nyghtertale, in the night.
fetisly, elegantly.
hir leste, her pleasure.
ferthyng, small bit, morsel.
raughte, reached out.
sikerly, surely.
peyned hire, gave herself the trouble.
countrefete, imitate.
cheere, behavior, manners.
digne, deserving, worthy.
wastel breed, cake-bread.
yerde, stick.

smerte, smartly.
pynched, finely pleated.
tretys, well-proportioned, well-shaped.
hardily, certainly.
undergrowe, short.
fetys, nice, fine.
holwe, hollow.
overeste, uppermost.
courtepy, short-coat.
fithele, fiddle.
sautrie, psaltery.
hente, acquire.
preye, pray.
scholeye, study.
sentence, meaning.
sownynge, consonant with.
parvys, church portico.
purchasour, conveyancer.
hadde, knew.
caas, cases.
doomes, opinions.
pynchen at, find fault with.
coude, knew.
pleyn, wholly.
medlee, mixed in color.
ceint, girdle.
barres, stripes.
persoun, parson.
snybben, reprove, snub.
spiced, scrupulous.

The Man of Lawe's Tale.

heigh, severe.
juyse, judgment.
reawme, realm.
spille, perish.
sonde, message.
seyl, sail.
steere, pilot.
breyde, drew.
thurgh, through.
eggement, instigation.
refut, refuge.
rewe on, have mercy on.
routheless, ruthless, merciless.
blissed hire, crossed herself.
ynogh, enough.
heryed, praised.
purchace, provide.

The Prioresse's Tale.

Jewerye, Jews' quarter.
wydwes, widow's.
clergeoun, chorister.
wone, custom, wont.
sely, good.
alday, always.
leere, learn.
hire, their.
anthiphoner, anthem-book.
dorste, dared.
ner and ner, nearer and nearer.
knowes, knees.
shent, scolded.
up swal, swelled up.
aleye, alley.
hente, caught.
ther, there where.
sowded, confirmed.
frayneth, asketh, beseecheth.
parfournest, performest.
ykorven, cut.
unnethe, with difficulty.
dooth to sterve, commits to die.
observe, countenance.
spreynd, sprinkled.

halse, clasp around the neck; *hence*, implore, beseech.
to my semynge, as it seems to me.
kynde, nature.
forlete, give up.
gruf, grovelling, prostrate.
leve, grant.

The Dethe of Blaunche, the Duchesse.

wone, custom, wont.
sadde, steady.
mochel, size.
overtwert, across, askance.
everydele, wholly.
foly, foolishly.
sprad, opened wide.
nas . . . ne, was neither . . . nor.

The Legende of Goode Women.

witen, know.
wenen, suppose, think.
regnes, kingdoms.
konne but lyte, know but little.
foules, birds.
agein, towards.
erly by the morwe, early in the morning.
ilike, alike.
ylike, alike, similar.

The Compleynte of Chaucer to his Purse.

but yf, unless.
voucheth sauf, vouchsafe.
stere, pilot.
frere, friar.
lygne, line.
mowen, may.

Fle fro the Pres.

pres, crowd.
sothfastnesse, truth.
clymbyng, climbing, ambition.
tikelnesse, uncertainty.
wele, wealth.
savour, taste, wish for.
reule, control.
rede, counsel.
spurn agein an nalle, kick against an awl, *i.e.*, kick against the prick.
croke, crock, pot.
daunte, conquer, subdue.
dede, act.
buxumnesse, submission.
wrasteling, wrestling, struggling.
wyldyrnesse, wilderness.
of alle, for all things.
weyve, put aside.
goste, spirit.

SPENSER.

The Faerie Queene.

areeds, prompts, incites.
scryne, case for papers.
mell, to meddle.
a little wyde, at a little distance.
edifyde, built.
file, polish.
remorse, pity.
fordonne, undone.
seeming, appearing.
wonne, habitation.
recure, recover.
surquedrie, pride.
leasings, falsehoods.
pight, placed.

pound, weight.
vade, go.

The Shepheardes Calender.

han, have.
yvie todde, ivy bush.
earnd, yearned.
lope, leaped.
wimble, agile.
wight, active.
latched, caught.
thilke, that.
reede, saying.
ryfe, ripe.
tickle, insecure.
seely, simple.

Mother Hubberd's Tale.

had-y-wist, had I known.
himselfe will a daw trie, will prove himself a fool.

BURNS.

To a Mouse.

sleeket, sleek.
brattle, race, hurry.
pattle, plough, staff.
daimen icker, ear of corn now and then.
thrave, twenty-four sheaves of grain.
big, build.
foggage, aftermath.
but, without.
hald, home.
thole, suffer.
cranreuch, hoar-frost.

The Cotter's Saturday Night.

stacher, stagger.
flichterin', fluttering.
ingle, fire.
belyve, presently.
tentie, heedful.
cannie, nice, dexterous.
bra', braw, fine.
spiers, asks.
uncos, news.
claes, clothes.
eydent, diligent.
jauk, to dally, to trifle.
hafflins, half, partly.
cracks, talks.
kye, cows, kine.
blate, bashful.
laithfu', sheepish.
hawkie, white-faced cow.
hallan, partition wall between the cottage and the cow house.
weel-hain'd, well-preserved.
kebbuck, cheese.
lint i' the bell, flax in flower.
lyart, grey.
haffets, temples.
wales, chooses.

For a' That, and a' That.

hodden grey, cloth which has the natural color of the wool.
birkie, fellow.
coof, a blockhead.
bear the gree, to carry off the prize, be the victor.

Auld Lang Syne.

braes, the slopes of a hill.
gowans, mountain daisies.

burn, brook.
fiere, brother, companion.
guid willie, hearty.
waught, cup, draught.
stoup, drinking cup.

Bannocks o' Barley.

bannocks, flat cakes.
bear meal, barley.
brulzie, broil.

Come boat me o'er to Charlie.

(No whole stanza of this song is thought to be original with Burns. It is his version of a Jacobite song.)

bawbee, a small coin.
auld Nick, the devil.
faes, foes.

The Birks of Aberfeldy.

linn, waterfall.
burnie, a little stream.

Highland Mary.

drumlie, muddy.
birk, birch.

John Anderson.

brent, smooth.
pow, head.
canty, cheerful, merry.

Oh, wert thou in the Cauld Blast.

airt, quarter of the heavens.
bield, shelter.

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